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THE LADY ROBERGIA.

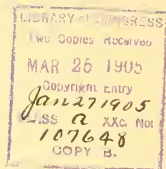
ROBERGIA

A Story of Old England

BY
RICHARD Y. COOK

Printed for Private Distribution

PHILADELPHIA
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RICHARD Y. COOK

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Contents.

	PAGE.
Preface	v
Borden Castle—Part I	1
In the New World—Part II	22
The Message—Part III	30
Addenda—Borden Pedigree, 1370-1904	91
Descriptive Notes	105

Illustrations.

The Lady Robergia	Frontispiece
	PAGE.
The Old Oak, Headcorn	1
Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Borden	19
Headcorn, Kent—The Main Street	22
Headcorn, Kent—From the Churchyard	26
Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Headcorn	30
The Nave and Chancel	35
The Lady Chapel	41
The Ancient Font	47
Reproductions from Church Register	51
Home of William Borden	67
Memorial Brass—Tomb of William Borden	73
Home of Margaret Reader	85



BORDEN MEMORIAL WINDOW, CHURCH OF
ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL, HEADCORN, KENT.

Robergia.

P R E F A C E



he story of "Robergia" was written in the summer of 1901, and occupied the leisure moments of a two weeks' sojourn at Bayreuth, where Mrs. Cook and myself were attending the production of the Wagner operas. Originally intended for the amusement of my grandchildren, the narrative has been thought by those interested to be worthy of preservation, and has, therefore, been put in type, the edition printed being limited to fifty copies.

The reasonable interest which all Americans of English ancestry take in the mother country, and in those of her people of the olden times who were their ancestors, years ago moved me to undertake investigations along various lines of family history. One of the results of these inquiries has been to

P R E F A C E

find that Richard Borden, the first of the name in America, was, in England, a neighbor and friend of Captain Thomas Cooke, also the first of the name in America. They therefore naturally associated themselves in the New World in founding the town of Portsmouth, Rhode Island (1643). Their families also intermarried, and while my wife (born Lavinia Borden) can trace her descent through fifteen generations of the male line back to Henry Borden (1370) of Hedcorn, Kent, England, yet the interest thus created has, in my case, been still further enhanced by a knowledge of the friendships of those who lived so long ago.

The certainty with which the descent of Richard Borden has been carried back to Henry Borden of Hedcorn, and Robergia, his wife, admits of no question, and the connection of Henry Borden (1370) and of his descendants down to William Borden (1531) with the town of Borden, in Kent, through inheritance of landed estates there, goes far to attest the correctness of the family

P R E F A C E

tradition that the first Borden (then Bourdon) came to England from Normandy in the eleventh century, and that Sir Simon de Bourdon built the parish church at Borden at the close of the twelfth century.

So much has seemed necessary in explanation of the little sketch which follows. In preparing it for publication I have had valuable assistance from Thomas Witherden Burden, Esq., and from his son, Sydney Burden, Esq., descendants of Henry Borden, of the fourteenth century, and both now resident at Headcorn, Kent, England. I am indebted to them for photographic reproductions of buildings and documents, and, in addition, Mr. Burden, Senior, has furnished the descriptive notes which accompany the various views, and has also been at great pains to verify the accuracy of the allusions to localities and authorities which are so frequent in the wills and papers quoted in the "Addenda." This "Addenda" has been included as a natural and desirable addition to a work which, however

P R E F A C E

unpretentious from a literary standpoint, must be of great interest to all who can trace their descent back to those of the olden times, of whom it treats.

RICHARD Y. COOK.


"WYNNEMERE," LANSDOWNE, PA.,
September 25, 1904.



ANCIENT OAK—CHURCHYARD, HEADCORN.

[See Note A.]

ROBERGIA

t was many, many years ago, so many, indeed, that I hesitate to begin my story lest you may doubt I know whereof I shall write, that a little girl lived in a grim old castle in the South of England, in what was known as the weald of Kent. Her name you could never have guessed had I not written it as the title of the story, of which little Robergia—maid, woman and wife—is the heroine. It was the month of March, in the year of our Lord 1194. The spring promised to be an early one, and the warm south wind from the Atlantic had already made the grass of greener hue, while swelling buds everywhere gave promise of the harvest of emerald leaves that would soon clothe the great forest surrounding the old castle, which stood like a sentinel on the

ROBERGIA

top of a hill from which the country was visible for miles. It was surrounded by a moat, or ditch, in which water was always kept; for those were troublous times, and a draw-bridge, which spanned the moat at the only entrance, was drawn up at night when the great gates were closed and the watch posted. A high wall of stone surrounded the courtyard. On the top of the wall was a broad platform running entirely around it. This platform was protected by another wall, or rampart, about six feet high, in which narrow openings were left so that the archers, or bowmen, could shoot arrows at any one outside, but be protected themselves from an enemy's missiles. There were no firearms in those days, as gunpowder was not known in Europe, and the soldiers had long bows for weapons, while the knights, who rode on horseback, fought with lances and swords and battle-axes. The bodies of the knights were covered with armor of steel, although the common soldiers had to content themselves

ROBERGIA

with helmets of iron and stiff coats of leather. The arrows of the "long bowmen," as they were called, often penetrated the knights' armor, however, and the English bowman was the terror of Europe.

There were not many soldiers in the castle in which our little girl lived. Four years before almost all of the retainers of her father, who was named Sir Simon de Bourdon, had accompanied him to the wars. More than one hundred years before, Sir Simon's grandfather had come from the sunny land of France with the great William of Normandy, and in a bloody battle fought close by where the old castle now stood, had helped to win Count William the crown of England. In return the grateful King had given him many thousands of acres of the conquered lands and the old Saxon castle that stood in their midst. It was in this castle, much improved and strengthened by the three generations of de Bourdons who were her ancestors, that the little Robergia de Bourdon lived. Her father

ROBERGIA

had been four years away from home and in all that time only twice had she news of him. Once a soldier, returning from the wars, had stopped over night on his way to Hedcorn, a village some fifteen miles away, where his people lived, and had told how, after much suffering, the English army and their leader, King Richard the lion-hearted, had reached Palestine, where they had gone, together with the army of King Philip of France, to rescue the tomb of Christ from the infidel Turk, and had fought a great battle.

Robergia's old nurse—Ursula by name—had brought this soldier up stairs from the buttery—as the kitchen was then called—and the little girl listened with glistening eyes as the soldier told how the great Richard had fought ever in the van of the battle, and that her father had been with him, and then she wept as he described how the King had been stricken down by a poisoned arrow so that his life had been despaired of ; but when the soldier told how

R O B E R G I A

Richard's Queen Berengaria had herself sucked the poison out of the wound so that the King got well again, Robergia got up from off her chair and raising her hands to heaven, asked God to bless the Queen and to bring her father and her King back safely again—and to give her strength, as He had given Queen Berengaria, the strength to always do her duty.

The second visitor was one of the wandering minstrels, common in those days to all of Europe, and welcomed everywhere, not only for the music they made, but because of the legends they sang, and the news they brought. This minstrel was an old, old man who had seen much and heard more. The little girl listened with pleasure to his songs of love and war and chivalrous adventure, and sad she was to have him leave; but after a week's stay he departed, despite the efforts made to have him remain. When he left he went north towards London, but before he departed he gave to the steward his real message, which was that

ROBERGIA

King Richard and Sir Simon were imprisoned in the heart of Germany through the perfidy of the German Emperor, instigated thereto by King John, Richard's brother, and that he had been sent to England to warn King Richard's friends.

Now Robergia was not by any means an ordinary little girl. At the time of which I write she was twelve years old, and her birthday, which came on the 13th of March, would soon arrive. Her mother had been dead for more than a year. Unlike her father, who was Norman-French, her mother was a Saxon, and of the race which governed England before Count William of Normandy landed on her shores and won a kingdom at the battle of Hastings. All the lands over which little Robergia looked out as she stood at the windows of the tower-room into which her bed-chamber opened, had once belonged to her mother's people. The new King of England had given them by right of conquest to the de Bourdon who had left his home in Nor-

ROBERGIA

mandy and followed him to the wars. But the conquered people were a great people also. A hundred years of conquest had not broken their spirit, and Sir Simon de Bourdon in the year 1180, and at Christmas, had married the heiress of the old Saxon owner of his castle and his lands, and now in little Robergia de Bourdon were united both the claims of right and of conquest to the broad acres of which one day she was to be the mistress, for her mother was dead and she was an only child. This mother she had dearly loved, and who doubts that this mother also loved her little girl?

The Saxons were a different race from the Normans. Their virtues were domestic. The Norman rode over the land—the Saxon tilled it. The Norman aspired to control and to govern—the Saxon loved his home and sought its ownership for himself, and respected the same ownership as his neighbor's right. The Norman was extravagant, and at times unjust—the Saxon was frugal and, although uncultivated, righteous at

ROBERGIA

heart. The Norman was chivalrous, but impracticable—the Saxon was plain in his manners, but exact in fulfilment of his promises. It was these two races that were united in the little girl whose lot it was to live so long ago and with such strange companionship, for since her dear mother had died she had but two companions besides her tutor, and these were Ursula, her old Saxon nurse, and Bruno, the staghound that each night slept on a mat at her chamber door, and would have died rather than let harm come to his mistress. Nor was Robergia so small. She was tall for her years, and carried her head high, as had been the wont of all her father's line, for pride, with them, both went before and followed after, and they had been used to command first and give their reasons afterwards. All of this had led to quarrels innumerable, both at home and abroad, and the de Bourdons had need of a firm seat in the saddle and much skill at arms to have survived all the contests into which

ROBERGIA

haughtiness of manner and arrogance of language had brought them. Sir Simon, however, had much of wisdom in his composition, and when he united the old and the new owners of his estate by marriage with the Saxon lady who had given him our little Robergia, it was after much reflection and with special sanction of the King, who himself courted the favor of the growing power of the Saxon holders of the land which was fast drifting back into the ownership of that part of the population which alone exercised thrift and self-control.

Robergia, who also bore her mother's name, was, like her, just and merciful. Of course so young a girl made many mistakes, but none of them came from her heart. It was the grand air and flashing eye and impetuous language of her Norman ancestors which burst forth that very day as she reproved the steward for punishing an old swineherd whose flock had wandered into the countless acres of the estate after the acorns which lay rotting under the great

ROBERGIA

oaks of its forests, but it was the gentleness of the Saxon mother which prompted her to raise the poor old man and send him to his hut again on her own palfrey and with one of her own attendants. And so it was that she was beloved by every one, whether Saxon or Norman—whether in the castle, or at the humble firesides of the peasants, whose huts were scattered through the forest, and whose labor paid for the little plots they tilled and the firewood they burned.

As I have already written, it was in March of the year 1194 and in a few days the twelfth anniversary of Robergia's birthday would arrive. As she talked and planned with old Ursula, how she longed for her father and wondered whether the wandering minstrel's story was true, and whether King Richard and her father might reach the English land again. On the night before the 13th a great storm arose, driving in from off the ocean and covering all the land with fog. A drenching rain fell from inky clouds

ROBERGIA

and the wind rattled at the casements and moaned around the tower in which Robergia's chamber was. This night she could not sleep, and calling Ursula she had her lamp lighted and getting out of bed sat listening to the storm.

It was about midnight, and the gale was at its worst, when Bruno, who had been allowed to come into the room, suddenly got on his feet and gave a menacing growl. Just then the challenge of the sentinel on the wall at the main gate was heard. The little girl and her nurse both started up in alarm. It was seldom, indeed, that strangers came to the castle even by daylight; but, owing to the troubled state of the country, no one ever traveled after dark, unless it might be the King's messengers (for John, Richard's brother, had given out that the King was dead, and had taken steps to usurp the throne which he had been left to guard while his brother was at the wars). Quick and sharp was the challenge of the sentinel, and quick and

ROBERGIA

sharp the reply. Almost before it was heard in the tower-room, which overlooked the postern, the dog's growl had changed to a glad bark, and it was her father's voice which answered the sentinel with "a Bourdon, a Bourdon; open the gate."

Some further parley there was before the old steward ordered the guard to raise the portcullis and drop the bridge to admit the strangers; for with Sir Simon there was another knight, a man of great stature and haughty bearing, who wore the visor of his helmet down. And so it was that on the 13th of March, 1194, Robergia de Bourdon celebrated her twelfth birthday, and had with her as her guests her long absent father and the great Richard, King of England.

Shipwrecked on his return from Palestine, where he had made a three years' truce with the Sultan Saladin, Richard had been perfidiously held by Duke Leopold VI of Austria, who imprisoned him in the fortress of Darnstein, and held him for a

ROBERGIA

ransom. The Emperor Henry VI of Germany paid the ransom asked (50,000 marks), but instigated thereto by Richard's treacherous brother, the Emperor re-imprisoned Richard in the Castle of Trifels until a larger ransom was paid. In February, 1194, after nearly eighteen months of confinement, Richard negotiated his release with the Emperor Henry, paying 100,000 marks down, and promising to pay 50,000 marks more after he reached England. It took another month before the royal wanderer and his faithful vassal, Robergia's father, found themselves on the coast of Normandy, whence they took ship, and on the 11th day of March landed safely on the south coast of England. Avoiding the parties sent out to watch the shore, and traveling only by night and through the forests by paths well known to Sir Simon, the King had come to his vassal's castle, and it was a right royal welcome that was given him. Messengers were sent out so soon as daylight came to summon those

ROBERGIA

who could be trusted, and Robergia's birthday was spent in the service of her King. None the less happy was she; for did she not have her father, and was not her guest the hero of all the tales of her childhood, as indeed he was the foremost of Europe's chivalry?

But I must not make my story too long. King Richard was re-crowned at Winchester on April 17, 1194, and, with all his faults, he was the foremost figure of his time, and a great Plantagenet, for so were his line and house called. At this ceremony both Robergia and her father were present, for so the King would have it. As Robergia stood in the great cathedral, her thoughts were such as few girls of her age have had before or since. Shut up as she had been in an old castle, and seeing little of the world, her life had been entirely spent among those older than herself, and for amusements she had only her studies and the few old manuscripts which were her confessor's, or had belonged to her

ROBERGIA

mother. Among these was one from the works which a Saxon King (the great Alfred) had caused to be compiled, and in the translation of which it was said he had himself at times engaged. It was this book, accompanied by the wise teachings of her confessor, who was also her tutor, and about whom I shall soon tell you, that largely formed her character.

It may seem strange to you that so young a girl should be interested in a book by so old a title as the "Consolations of Philosophy;" but you must remember how peculiar were the conditions under which Robergia lived, and, more than that, you must also recall that King Alfred, with whom she connected the book, was the idol of the English people, and the greatest King that England has ever had. And so it was that when Bishop de Lucy, the Diocesan of Winchester, placed the crown on King Richard's head, Robergia saw more than the ceremony before her eyes, and recalled the Saxon King as well, whose

ROBERGIA

capital city Winchester had been, and who, more than two hundred years before, had given to her mother's people the lands which some day would be hers. Before going back to the castle, Robergia asked to be shown the place where King Alfred had been buried, and under the east window in the "new monastery" which he had founded, she saw the tomb of the great Saxon King.

Returning to the castle she took up the routine of daily life. Her father made much of her, but it was soon apparent that he was not to be long with his little girl. The hardships of the campaigns in Palestine and the journey home had broken his health. The next year he died, and our little girl was left alone, save for the faithful Ursula and her tutor. When her mother came to live at the castle she had asked of her husband that she might have as the priest of the chapel in the castle her own Saxon confessor, and not a Norman monk, and to this Sir Simon had agreed.

ROBERGIA

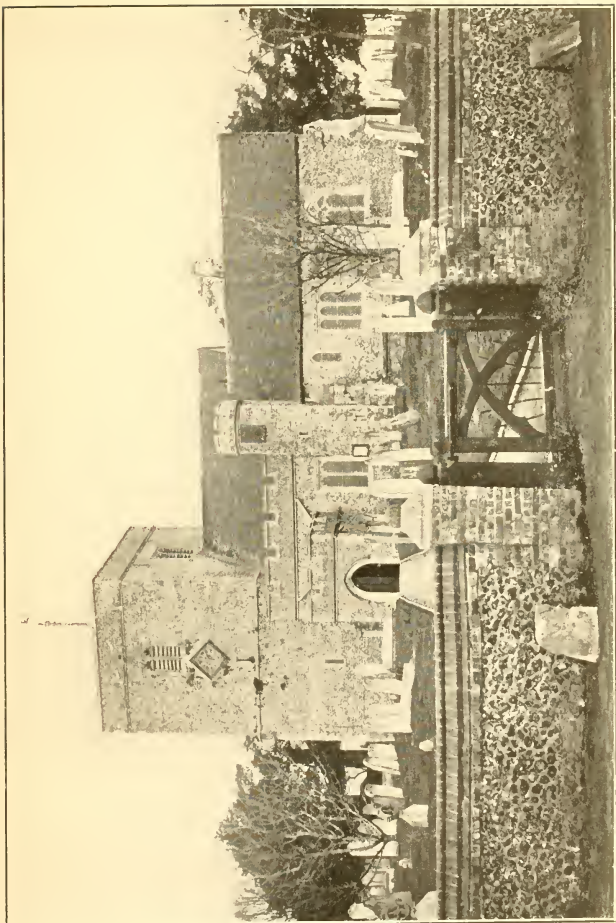
This priest was named Athelstan, and he was a good man. In that day priests were not always what they should be ; but Athelstan remembered what the Lord and Master taught, and, putting aside appetite for worldly honors and ambitions, strove only to do his Lord's bidding. When the mother died she charged her confessor that he should always care for her dear little daughter, and thus it was that Robergia, although without father and mother, had indeed two devoted friends.

When her father's will was read there was in it a clause which was not then unusual, but which would now seem strange. Sir Simon left everything he had to his daughter, provided she should marry her cousin, Francis de Bourdon, that the lands might not go out of the name ; otherwise all his broad acres were to belong to his next of kin, who was Francis de Bourdon, who lived in Normandy, and who was the second son of his cousin, and was therefore Robergia's second cousin. Besides his castle

ROBERGIA

and lands, Sir Simon left much money and plate, and altogether Robergia was a very rich little girl, indeed, and when, in the year 1200 and at Christmas, she married her cousin, Francis de Bourdon, of Bayeux, all of Kent came to the wedding, and no one had ever seen a grander ceremony nor a handsomer couple.

As I have already said, Robergia was wise even beyond her years and thoughtful. When her mother died she was buried in the vault of the family chapel within the castle walls, and her father was laid beside his wife when death took him also. As the years had passed since the de Bourdons had been lords of the land, the population had increased very much. Many spots in the forest had been cleared, and at one place, not more than a mile from the castle gate, a village had sprung up, and many houses had been built. It was here, after much consultation with Athelstan, that Robergia decided to build a church that should be a memorial to her father and her mother.



CHURCH OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL, BORDEN, KENT.

See Note B.]

ROBERGIA

This building was begun in the year 1199, and the tower and transepts were completed in the year 1204. After that the work was more slowly done, and it was not until the year 1210 that everything was finished, and the parish church of Bourdon was consecrated.

Now, our little girl, grown to be a stately woman and the mother of two beautiful boys (one named Simon and the other called after her hero-king—Richard), was peculiar in many things. She was above all things thankful for her mother's line and example, and after that she gave proper value to the pride and care which had separated her father's line from the faults and lack of forethought which were common to the great mass of the people in the days in which he lived. And above all she was just and merciful. So it was that on the day on which the church at Bourdon was consecrated she had her confessor prepare a sheet of parchment, and on it was written in the curious monkish Latin mixture of

ROBERGIA

the written language of the times, the following, which I translate so that it may be understood:

“BE JUST—for the Lord has only loaned us that which we have, whether of goods or of talents, and in their use we must consider the rights of all men.

“BE MERCIFUL—for we shall have no greater claim to the mercy we all shall finally need than that we forgave our brothers’ faults.

“BE TRUE—to friendship and to God, for truth is all of this life worth the having, and perfect truth is what the life to come shall reveal to us. It is the prince of darkness that is the prince of lies.”

This parchment was sealed up in a leaden box and placed in a hollow stone, cemented into the second course of the tower of the church on the inside, and directly opposite a stone in the opposite wall on which was cut a cross. And the church was consecrated in due form, the Lady Robergia and her husband, Francis

ROBERGIA

de Bourdon, attending mass, and kneeling at the altar, their little sons beside them. And in the year of our Lord 1220 the Lady Robergia died.

ROBERGIA

PART II.

Does the world grow old; or is it that with the lapse of years and as the centuries pass on in ever moving cycles, our dear and patient mother still renews her youth? Sure I am that for those who treat her well she always wears a smiling visage—nor do her gifts ever fail when industry and patience sow the seed and faith awaits the harvest. She only asks of her children that they shall be wise and temperate as was she herself through the countless ages in which she stored for their comfort and use the riches which lie under the mountains and in her fertile plains. She may seem old when grim-visaged war sweeps across her plains, and tyranny oppresses her sons and daughters and takes from them the fruits of their labors—but she grows young again with the joys of giving. Her coal for industry, her grain for the husbandman, her gold and



HEADCORN, KENT—THE MAIN STREET.

[See Note C.]

ROBERGIA

gems for the adornment of the beautiful among her children. Music and art abide in her life, and for those who will learn she ever offers the example of obedience to the great lawgiver in whose service she has always had her existence, and at whose behest all her deeds are done.

* * * * *

It was the year of our Lord 1890. Again has spring come in the ever-recurring cycles of rest and fruitfulness which follow the sun in his course, and it is in the new world that our story is enacted by those in whose fortunes our interest is centered.

A carriage drawn by a pair of stylish bays is just entering the drive which leads from the main road to a house, part new, part old, which is visible across the lawn, and at the end of a shady avenue over which a double row of maples arch their boughs. Two colored men sit upon the box. The carriage has but one occupant, a lady, dressed in white, for the month of May in the

ROBERGIA

Middle States of the North American Republic is at times warm. There is something in the poise of the lady's head and attitude which suggest grace of movement even before she alights at the door of the house, which another colored man opens for her entrance. As she smiles her acknowledgment of the footman's attention at the carriage door, she turns for a moment to say a word to the coachman in praise of the condition of his horses, and then enters the house.

The observer hesitates a moment in doubt. Can it be that I have been mistaken? In the quick estimate of character made when first I saw the carriage and its occupant at the top of the hill and afterwards as they swept up the drive, I had concluded that pride formed the governing element in the lady's character and that haughtiness accompanied the beauty which I could not help but admire. There was no mistaking the carriage of the head—for pride was written all over the contour

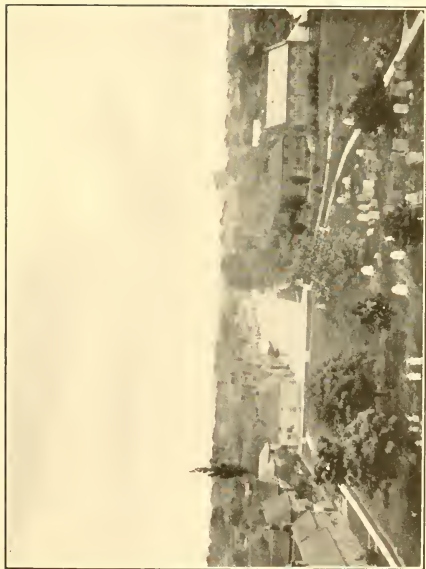
ROBERGIA

of neck and shoulders as their owner sat, and anon rose gracefully to alight. I had seen the same things too often in old pictures to be mistaken now. And yet here was this proud beauty who had not vouchsafed me a single glance as she passed, smiling on her servants—and soon a musical laugh and pleasant voice are wafted through an open window as some one—doubtless she herself—tells “Willie” to bring the new evening dress which is to surprise—but who the prospective lucky victim of astonishment is to be, I do not hear. “Willie” I do see, however, for she passes across the hall, and past the open door, carrying a large box—and “Willie” is not a man, as might have been supposed, but a maid, and colored, as seem to be all the other inhabitants of this house, saving only my lady in white. But, notwithstanding all I have seen, I still stand by my first impressions—she is as proud as Lucifer!

Transacting the business which had brought me to the little post village at the

ROBERGIA

foot of the hill, I decide to retrace my steps, although the direct road to Philadelphia, where I must be that evening, lies in another direction, and conclude to take the train at a station lying beyond the top of the hill on which is the house up to whose door my lady of pride and condescension drove that afternoon. As I reach the gate the same carriage which I had seen two hours before is again just descending the hill. There is now, however, but one man on the box, while its sole occupant is a gentleman apparently about forty years of age. He is stoutly built, wears a silk hat, and is dressed with rather an affectation of neatness. Business and care for affairs is plainly written in the evenly balanced curves of the well-rounded contour of his head, as well as in the gray eyes and firm lines of the face which is now looking at me over the top of the newspaper, which he has been reading and is just about to fold up as a preparation for the alighting, which I know is soon to take place at the



HEADCORN, KENT—FROM THE CHURCHYARD.

[See Note D.]

ROBERGIA

door through which the lady in white disappeared earlier in the afternoon. Something which I had heard in the little town at the foot of the hill had increased my interest in this couple of the house at its top, and I invent an excuse for accosting the gentleman, only sorry that I had not risked a rebuff earlier when the lady, too, had passed that way. Seeing my intention the gentleman directed his driver to stop, and to my inquiry as to whether I was on the right road to L—— and could get a train there for Philadelphia, received an instant answer that covered in a few words all that I could possibly want to know in connection with the ostensible object of my inquiry. I was told that “I was on the right road; had fifteen minutes’ walk to the station at L——, would find a train in five minutes after reaching there, and would be in Philadelphia at —,” pulling out his watch and consulting it, “twenty minutes past 5 o’clock.” Before I had quite digested the answer the horses had started, and inclining

ROBERGIA

his head in reply to my salutation and thanks, the gentleman, following in the footsteps of the lady—and pleasant ones I still thought them—had alighted at the same door, which he unlocked with a pass-key and entered, carefully closing it behind him.

That I am a traveling man is probably against me, for the drummer has the same bad reputation the world over. That I am unmarried is my special misfortune; and if ever I had thought so before, much the more did I think so as I toiled up the hill and along the road past cottage after cottage until at last I reached the station and was hurried into the city. What a lucky fellow, thought I, to have such a woman to spoil—and who wouldn't have a stable and an outfit of servants and milliners' bills and opera boxes, if such a "my lady" were on hand to grace them! But what a fool I was—only a glimpse on the road and through a door, with ten minutes of gossip at a country store, and visions, coming and going, were dancing through

ROBERGIA

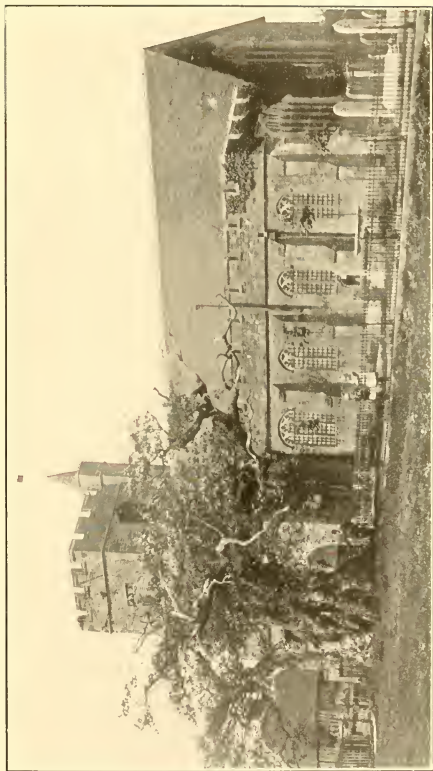
my head as if she were fancy free and I knight errant. Well, be it so; but with it all I know the style—as proud as Lucifer—but the man who understands her has no common fortune to his lot in this prize of matrimony which he has drawn.

Whether I shall ever see either of the inmates of the house on the hill again, I do not know, and, as regards the gentleman, I do not care; but if ever again my firm should send me from Boston, on a hurry call to Philadelphia, I think I shall again walk from D—— to L——, and, perhaps, lie awake of nights also, wondering at some people's luck and others' misfortunes.

ROBERGIA

PART III.

It is said that migrating birds, crossing the track which the ships of Columbus followed, influenced him to a more southerly course. It was this deviation that brought his vessels to the Bahamas for a landing, and left the great North American Continent free from the domination of Spain. It was for England and for the descendants of Englishmen that, in God's wise providence, this great Western land was destined, and so small a thing as the flight of vagrant birds, in their passage from a summer to a winter home, became the instrument in His hands for the accomplishment of His purpose. The Puritan of New England, the Quaker of Pennsylvania, and the more aristocratic immigrants of New York and Virginia, found a virgin soil awaiting their coming, and a climate and surroundings which invited them to productive effort



CHURCH OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL, HEADCORN, KENT.

[See Note E.]

and a method of life which stimulated independence both in thought and action. It was natural, therefore, that the best type of manhood and of government in the long line of Norman, of Saxon, and of German ancestry, out of which England's people had sprung, should reappear in the new Western world to which these sons of the motherland had come. There is much that has happened between the year of our Lord 1900 and the flight of migrating birds across the course of the three little ships which carried Columbus and his adventurous crews; but no greater influence for good has the world ever seen than was then exerted by these birds of passage.

* * * * *

"If you can get ready by the 18th, we will go to Europe." The speaker was the gentleman already known to the reader as the owner of the house on the hill; the person addressed, as may be readily guessed, was the "lady in white," with whom we are also acquainted. The gen-

ROBERGIA

tleman looks somewhat older than when he answered the question addressed to him at his front gate; the lady gives no sign of lapse of years. "But," said she, "you told me you could not go when I asked you in May last, and now it is July, and you unexpectedly change your mind. Not that I cannot get ready," she added hurriedly, "for you know I am always prepared to go to Europe; but isn't this change somewhat sudden?"

"Well, you see, my dear," replied the gentleman, "the world of business, which claims me, and the world of pleasure, over which you preside, and in which I at times am permitted to live, do not always agree in their mandates. Fortunately, the affair which promised to come to a head at midsummer has been postponed until fall, and I can now get away for two months, which I believe is your minimum European tour. If, therefore, you can have my own belongings and yours packed by Saturday next, I have the refusal of our old room on the "Lu-

R O B E R G I A

cania," while Mr. Keppie cables me from Liverpool that he will hold our cabin for the return voyage in September. What say you?"

"If it were not for the children you very well know what I would say," replied the lady. "I will ask Nannie;" and she arose from her chair and went across the hall to the telephone. Ringing up "Wynnestay," which was connected by private wire, and where their only and married son lived, the following conversation took place:

"Well, is that Miss Nannie? No. Please ask her to come to the telephone. Is that you, dear? How are the children? How is my little violet eyes? Asleep. And how is naughty little Em? Asleep, too. Well, kiss them both for me. Have they been well to-day? What do you think, pa now says he can go to Europe, and wants me to be ready on Saturday, and this is only Tuesday? Would you and 'Jag' be willing? Of course, if I want to go. Would miss me awfully. But think pa

ROBERGIA

ought to have his vacation, and 'Jag' would say the same. Awfully sudden, though. I should say so; but I don't think I can leave the children for Europe or for anything else; and if I do take your advice and go, it will be the last time. Good-by, dear."

"Have you decided?" was the greeting which met our lady of the telephone on her return to the library. The answer was a somewhat hesitating "yes;" and so it happened that on July 18, 1900, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Y. Cook, of Philadelphia, were comfortably established in Cabin No. 1 on the Cunarder "Lucania;" and having arranged their effects, were sitting on the promenade deck, in their steamer-chairs, watching the fast-disappearing Long Island shore as the great liner ploughed her way to the eastward.

"Do you know," said the gentleman, "that I have never told you the real reason for our sudden trip to Europe?"

"Indeed," said the lady; "and pray why not, for I shall want a good reason since my



NAVE AND CHANCEL,
CHURCH OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL,
HEADCORN, KENT.

[See Note F.]

ROBERGIA

pleasure seems not to have been the inciting cause?"

"Because," said he, "I wanted to have the gratification of feeling that you were going to please me, and after that to have the added pleasure of doing everything I could to make your trip a pleasant one. So see now what I have laid out for your profit and amusement? About three months since," continued the speaker, "I thought I would see what I could find out about the story which has been handed down in your father's family concerning the first immigrant to America coming in his own ship, etc., etc."

"And what have you found out?" said the lady quickly.

"Well, just sufficient to prove it not true, but with enough of verity to account for the tradition. The first immigrant may have come in his own ship, but there is no way of proving it; but, in the second migration from New England to New Jersey, which took place in the eighteenth century, the

ROBERGIA

Borden of that day and journey undoubtedly transported himself and his effects by water, and in all probability sailed in his own vessel."

"You interest me," said the lady. "And what else did you find out?"

"I will tell you," said he; "or, better still, I will read it to you, for I have written it all out." And going into the cabin he almost immediately came out with a formidable roll of manuscript in his hand.

"Let me see," said the lady, laying down her book and looking at her watch. "It is now four o'clock, dinner at seven, thirty minutes in which to dress, leaves two and one-half hours for the reading. I will sacrifice my nap to the manes of my ancestors, and if I prove not to be a good listener it will be because of the faults of the narrative; the audience and the subject are, of course, beyond criticism."

The narrative was called "THE BORDEN (anciently BOURDON) FAMILY IN AMERICA," and while I will not give it here

ROBERGIA

in full, sufficient to say that it was almost six o'clock before it was finished. Compressed into reasonable compass it seemed that Richard Borden, of Kent, England, had emigrated to America in 1633, and had settled first on the island of Aquidneck, Rhode Island, and had afterwards laid out the town of Portsmouth, in the same State. More or less active in public affairs in each generation, his descendants had been traced with certainty to the Borden who had, in turn, taken up lands in New Jersey, and the eight generations beginning with Richard Borden and ending with Lavinia, daughter of John Borden, and wife of Richard Y. Cook, of Philadelphia, were defined and described with accuracy and great wealth of detail. A most interesting feature of this genealogy was that, by intermarriage between the two families in the past, Richard Borden had also become one of the husband's ancestors as well. So that the two travelers who were crossing the Atlantic in the year 1900 had the same great-grandfather, who, in the

ROBERGIA

seventeenth century, made the same journey; but under what different conditions, and with how little idea of the wealth of history that was to follow!

"How interesting!" said the wife, as the reader ceased and folded his manuscript. "And to think that one of your great-grandfathers should have married one of my dear old great-grandmothers way back in the times when the Indians were in the woods, and the men went to church with guns in their hands! Now I know," added she, "why it is I couldn't help liking you. You see my old great-grandmother sealed my fate for me."

"And may the Lord reward her with all good things," replied the husband. "Don't you know," he continued, "that two other matters in this narrative have greatly interested me, and have directly led to the journey we are now making? In the first place, it is absolutely sure that the Cooks and the Bordens were neighbors in England before coming to America. You see the first

ROBERGIA

Cook here (Thomas by name) and the first Borden arrived within one year of each other, and settled at the same place. One evidently sent for the other by prior arrangement. This is one of the things I want to look up. The other point of interest is the use, way back in the beginning of the eighteenth century, of the surname of 'Robergia.' I don't know why it is, but this name, which one of the young mothers of the line gave her first-born daughter, haunts me. That it is a family name I cannot doubt. It is too unusual to be an accident. It is also in derivation a curious mixture of Norman and Anglo-Saxon, and its use by this mother of the new country points most clearly to a prior mother of the same name in the old land across the sea. If you are willing, therefore, I want to devote whatever is necessary of our time to finding out whether there has not been a 'Robergia' in the Borden line in England prior to 1633, and just when and where she lived, for I am sure the name is so old a

R O B E R G I A

one that if we discover the first who bore it we will have found who and what was the oldest Borden within the reach of modern inquiry."

"How curious!" said the lady; "but do you know that when you read that name in your narrative my heart jumped and a queer sensation passed over me. Of course, it is all nonsense; but if I believed in such things, I would say that the spirit of some 'Robergia' of the long ago had influenced me. It is strange," she continued reflectively, "but I already feel that I could no more go back without a search for 'Robergia' than live without you and my dear ones at home." And so it was that the search for the "Lady Robergia Borden" was agreed upon.

Some materials had been collected, it seemed. The gentleman had found, in his search among the annals of Kent, that there was an old town there called Borden, situated near Sittingbourne, a station on the Southeastern Railroad, about fifty miles from London. Writing to a correspondent



LADY CHAPEL,
CHURCH OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL,
HEADCORN, KENT.

[See Note G.]

ROBERGIA

in London, he had received a letter just before sailing, in which was the information hurriedly conveyed that a great deal had been ascertained, but, of necessity, reserved for a personal interview, which was suggested at the Hotel Metropole, in London, for the Saturday evening of the arrival of the "Lucania" at Liverpool. The letter read: "My information is of that character, and your stay is to be so short, that I deem it wise to communicate with you at the earliest moment possible after your arrival. Please come immediately from Liverpool to London. I will call at the Hotel Metropole, where I understand you always stop when in London, and shall expect to find you there at 8 P.M. on July 25th." The signature of one of the best genealogists in England was affixed to this letter.

"Well," said the lady, "here is a surprise—and what a delightful air of mystery about it all!—and such a dear hubby to have arranged it all for me! But," continued she, thoughtfully, "I cannot explain the

ROBERGIA

feeling I experienced when first you mentioned the name 'Robergia' to me. It was as if some invisible power had laid hold of me that was both compelling and beseeching. Indeed, it frightens me when I think of it. What is the 'Lady Robergia' to me, and what am I to 'Robergia?' "

"That is just what I am determined to find out," said the husband, "and if your wit, my pertinacity, and our London correspondent's knowledge do not discover it, you may rest assured that it is undiscoverable."

The usual routine of life aboard ship passed through its six days of continually recurring incidents. The captain, reasonably affable to the passengers at his table, our voyagers being there established for their meals, attended strictly to business when not in the saloon, and navigated his ship, leaving gossip and small talk to those who enjoyed it. The purser buckled on his sword-belt on Sunday and read the service, and particularly the petition for "Peace

ROBERGIA

in our time," with great unction. The passengers, divided into first trippers who didn't know and old stagers who did, were equally and impartially treated by Neptune in the distribution of the prizes of the *Mal-de-mer* lottery. The concert was given as usual in the saloon on Thursday evening. On Friday, at noon, the Irish coast was sighted, and at half-past 2 o'clock the Fast-net was abeam. Queenstown was reached on the same afternoon at 5 o'clock, and the two tenders, "America" and "Ireland," were found awaiting the great ship at the entrance to the harbor. The passengers for Ireland and the mails were soon transferred, and with a sigh the engines again began their task as the last 240 miles of the long voyage from New York to Liverpool were rapidly covered by the fast-moving ship. At 9 o'clock on Saturday morning, notwithstanding a short delay for the tide at the bar at the mouth of the Mersey, the steamer was brought alongside the landing-stage and her passengers quickly passed

R O B E R G I A

ashore. At 11 o'clock the special for London left the Riverside station of the Northwestern Railway, and at 3 P.M., with a triumphant shriek, the engine pulled into Euston station, completing the journey of 3,500 miles begun, almost to a minute, just seven days before. At the Hotel Metropole our travelers found their suite of rooms awaiting them as ordered by cable ten days before.

At precisely 8 o'clock a knock at the door of our travelers' apartments is followed by the handing in of the card of a genealogist employed a month before, who will be known to us as Miss W., for it is a common fact that ladies are among the most successful of the class engaged in untangling from the records of the past those interesting, but long-forgotten facts, which make real men and women of those who have lived and worked and suffered that we in turn may take up the never-ending task to which mysterious fate has assigned the human race.

ROBERGIA

Upon being shown to our travelers' apartments Miss W., after introduction to Mrs. Cook, began her story thus :

“When first I read your letter and such data as you could give me, I despaired of doing much for you. The fact that Richard Borden, in his will, made in America subsequent to 1633, mentioned that he had certain tenements in Kent which he had from his father, gave, of course, a clue, but the destruction of records brought about by the constantly recurring struggles between the rival houses of York and Lancaster, and afterwards by the Civil War between Charles I and his Parliament, has made almost hopeless any recourse to parish registers, etc. There was, however, one hope. This lay in the Canterbury wills. Here, and particularly if the families sought were attached to the Church, might be found what we were looking for. Fortune favored us and I have traced, through an unbroken series of wills, Richard Borden's ancestors for eight generations to Henry Borden or

R O B E R G I A

Burden, of Hedcorn, who was born in the year 1370. Now this is extraordinary and ought to satisfy any one who, starting out in America in the year of our Lord 1900, seeks to discover from whom he is descended of those who lived in England in the days when few could read and fewer still could even write a record by which alone a remembrance could be conveyed to later generations. But that Mrs. Cook here is the sixteenth generation from Henry Borden—variously spelled Bourdon, Burden and Borden, of Hedcorn, County Kent, England—who was born A.D. 1370, is absolutely certain, and I could prove it in any Court of Chancery in England. This, however, is not what I wanted to see you about personally, and I must say that in all the investigations with which I have been charged, there has never been one which has reached the stage to which this has come. In fact, it has got where, being a woman, I cannot successfully handle it further. Not that I mean," she quickly added,



ANCIENT FONT,
CHURCH OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL,
HEADCORN, KENT.

[See Note H.]

ROBERGIA

“that I intend to drop it. On the contrary, I am intensely interested, and I am here to-night largely that I may urge upon you the wisdom, and even the imperative necessity, that you do not allow this investigation to cease where I must needs stop in its active prosecution.”

As Miss W. ceased talking to take breath her auditors noticed her agitation. Begging her to proceed, she continued:

“I must apologize for what must appear singular to you in my manner and words; but indeed I cannot help them, and the excuse I shall give you, which is the only one I can offer, may not seem sufficient; but such as it is, I will now present it. When I examined the old wills of the Canterbury Collection, I remember taking an interest in the recurrence of certain peculiar family names. We genealogists, you know, consider the duplication of names a pretty sure indication of relationship. In the case of Mrs. Cook’s ancestry, however, the continuity does not depend upon any

ROBERGIA

such clues. The transfer of property by duly authenticated wills establishes each generation in its proper order and place beyond the possibility of question. In the will which brought Henry Borden of Hedcorn into the line, there is mentioned the bequest of 'certain lands which I hold at Borden.' This will was in the second volume of the Canterbury Wills and consequently almost at the beginning of those thus transcribed. Of course I went to Borden. The Vicar and a Miss M., who took considerable interest in the matter, were both kind and obliging. The old registers were freely opened to my inspection, but I already knew much more than they could tell me. These records prior to the sixteenth century had either been lost or were illegible, and but few Bordens were entered either for baptism, marriage or death, and none at all after the year 1600. I gave up the search in despair and concluded that you would be satisfied with what I already had, as indeed you well might,

ROBERGIA

since not a client I have ever had has had better fortune.

“It being too late to drive to Sittingbourne in time to take a train for London, the Vicar kindly asked me to remain over night at the Vicarage, and I thankfully accepted his invitation, as also his permission to inspect the old church, to the tower-door of which he gave me the key. There could be no doubt of the antiquity of the building. The tower was undoubtedly of the twelfth or thirteenth century. The choir was quite as old. The nave might be a century later. Therefore the building tallied with the tradition which you mentioned to me that Sir Simon de Bourdon founded it in the reign of King Stephen. But we genealogists never put too much faith in so-called traditions. They are often invented by later generations, and then, of course, are made to fit already ascertained conditions.

“After completing my examination of the building I sat down in one of the pews and took out my manuscript, intending to cor-

ROBERGIA

rect it so that it would be ready for the mail which would leave London the next afternoon for the United States. I had no sooner begun to read than I was sensible of a queer sensation. I cannot describe it to you. I am not in the least superstitious, but such a feeling I had never felt before. It passed away in a few minutes, when suddenly I felt the same thing again, and this time more intensely. I was frightened, and yet not in the ordinary sense. There was no impression that the locality, or the building, or anything in or about them, threatened me with harm. Quite the contrary. I was entirely satisfied to be just where I was, but something seemed to have possession of me. I can imagine that hypnotism is thus exercised, and that the person hypnotized feels exactly as I felt. Again the feeling passed away. Again I resumed my reading. Again and suddenly I shook with emotion; my manuscript almost fell from my hands and I started up, this time thoroughly alarmed. As I have already said, I am not

REPRODUCTIONS OF ENTRIES IN THE REGISTER
OF THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER AND
ST. PAUL, HEADCORN, KENT.

1595
Richard son Mathew Borden baptizad

"Richard son Matthew Borden, baptized Feb. 22, 1595."

1625
Richard Borden and Joane Fowle married Septeb. 28

"Richard Borden and Joan Fowle, married Septb. 28, 1625."

1626
Richard son of Richard Borden bap July 9

"Richard sonne of Richard Borden, bap. July 9, 1626."

1627
Thomas sonne of Richard Borden bap October 23

"Thomas sonne of Richard Borden, bap. October 23, 1627."

ROBERGIA

at all nervous. Contrary to English customs, I use no stimulants of any kind, even avoiding tea—the national beverage. It so happened that I had just finished a page as the feeling had come over me, and when in a few moments I had sufficiently regained my composure to gather up my papers, I noticed the last word, the reading of which had been coincident with the attack which had so alarmed me. This word was ‘Robergia.’ I then remembered that it was the same word which had been before my eyes and in my mind when the other attacks had startled me, but in less degree. You will recall that ‘Robergia’ is a name much used by the earlier Bordens as a surname for the daughters of the family. Early in the investigation I was much impressed by the constant recurrence of the name and I was satisfied that this use indicated the prominence of its first owner in the annals of the family.

“As I sat in the old church, where perchance this first lady Robergia might often

ROBERGIA

have worshipped, my thoughts almost without effort spanned the centuries, and in my mind's eye I saw, amid the gathering gloom of the fast-fading day, the old altar again surrounded by the officiating priest and his acolytes, while the deepening shadows cast by the tracery of the windows, and by many a corbel, capital and column, peopled the pews with beings as weird and unsubstantial as my thoughts. And as I mused the sun at last went down and left the church in darkness. Still I lingered, and perhaps for half an hour fancy after fancy chased each other across my mind, as knight and lady, priest and suppliant, lord and peasant came and went in a curious medley of half real, half unsubstantial pictures of men and women and things and actions of the long ago. At last I arose, intending to return to the vicarage. I had been seated in one of the pews of the nave facing the altar. The door of exit was in the tower, and, of course, at the west end of the church. Walking carefully, for it

ROBERGIA

was quite dark, I opened the door of the pew and stepped into the aisle. Taking a last look at the altar, where a faint glimmer of light came through the old glass of the windows in the east wall, I turned towards the tower, intending to leave the building, when I was again sensible of the weird and unearthly feeling which had already come over me three times before on that afternoon, and as I looked towards the door of exit, a ghostly light flickered for a moment across my sight, went out and then reappeared, and again went out. I clutched the nearest pew for support, or I should have fallen, so startled was I.

“As I have already told you, I am neither a nervous woman nor a foolish girl. What happened there occurred as I tell it to you, strange as it may seem. I soon recovered, and my first thought was to escape from the place as soon as possible. But we are all creatures of habit, and my second thought, true to my daily routine of investigation, was to discover, if possible,

ROBERGIA

what this light was and what it meant. I waited for it to reappear, walking slowly towards the place where I had seen it, which, as well as I could judge in the darkness, was somewhere on the west wall of the tower. I had almost reached the western end of the building, my eyes fixed on the spot where I expected to see the light, and my steps carefully guided by the sense of feeling in my hand, which followed the line of pews, when suddenly the apparition again appeared, shone brightly on the west wall of the tower for perhaps the space of thirty seconds, flickered for a moment and then went out, and although I waited for fully half an hour, it did not again appear. As I opened the tower door, both gladly and regretfully, for a strange fascination held me to the place, while a fear which I both acknowledged and protested against urged me to leave, a gust of wind almost tore it out of my grasp, and great drops of rain, the precursor of a storm which raged all night, drove into my face. I hurriedly

ROBERGIA

closed and locked the door and hastened to the house, which I reached after a slight wetting, for it was near at hand, to be most hospitably received by the vicar and his wife. They commented on the length of my stay in the old church, which I explained by my devotion to the antique both in buildings and story, for I deemed it unwise to say anything to them of the fancy which had possessed me, and which had grown out of the happenings of that afternoon. I cannot explain this feeling of reticence better than by saying that I felt as if they were merely a modern accident in their connection with the old church, and that its true owners were those who, like your wife, can trace their descent back to its founders. That the church was built by a Borden I firmly believe, although as yet I cannot prove it; but I am convinced the proof can be secured, and what is as yet only an instinct assures me that this evidence is somewhere about the building itself. A curious combination of circumstances leads me to this

ROBERGIA

conclusion, and if you will listen for a few moments longer I think you will agree with me. Let me briefly recapitulate the circumstances :

“First. Mr. Cook, of Philadelphia, requests me, a professional genealogist, residing in London, to investigate the ancestry of one Richard Borden, who sailed from England for America in the year 1633.

“Second. I take up the work, fix my fee and begin an investigation in a perfectly cold-blooded way. In the usual course of my business I look over a great mass of papers, and am unusually successful and proportionately elated and gratified because of the pleasure I shall have in advising my clients of my discoveries. Business only, however, has thus far marked my acts and influenced my feelings, when I reach stage:

“Third. And finding in one of the old wills mention of ‘Borden,’ a town of Kent, I take a run down there to see whether there may not be some further clue or addition to my already most satisfactory discoveries,

ROBERGIA

and enter into an entirely different relation to the matter. From a cool-headed and judicially-minded investigator, I suddenly become an ardent partisan. From the earthly, I turn to the unearthly. No longer do records and registers, deeds and wills influence me. I am possessed by something, and I cannot tell what. The Lady Robergia lived, and it is the Lady Robergia I must find. It is not I, nor you, that has so determined, for I believe it is the Lady Robergia herself who wills it.

“And now, Mr. Cook,” said Miss W., “if you will take some risk I believe I have the clue, and this clue I will give to no one other than yourself and your wife, and only to you if you will consent to act on it. And now that you have heard my story what is your answer?” Miss W. paused and looked at her auditors.

After a few minutes’ thought Mr. Cook spoke. “I have,” said he, “been much interested in your story. Already prepared, because of my own experience, to

R O B E R G I A

sympathize with your feelings, it requires but little explanation to enable me to understand the conclusions you have reached and the causes which have led up to them. The introduction of the supernatural, or at least that which is closely akin to the supernatural, does not seem to me so strange as you may have supposed I would think it. I am a man of business, and engaged in pursuits and the accomplishment of purposes far removed from either the romantic or the imaginative, and yet I have myself experienced a singular interest, not to use a stronger phrase, in the Lady Robergia, who must have been the first of the Borden line of that name. My wife states that the same curious and peculiar feeling has been manifest in her emotions. There are, therefore, three persons interested in this investigation who are entirely in sympathy with its purposes and peculiar developments. But when you suggest the taking of a risk, I must, in ordinary prudence, decline to commit myself until I know exactly what

R O B E R G I A

the extent of the risk is, and I cannot pledge myself nor my support to any scheme in advance of its complete disclosure. Much as I desire to hear your story to its close, I must decline to go further unless I reserve complete liberty of action to myself after full information."

Miss W. hesitated a moment before replying. At last she said: "I know your requirements are reasonable. At the same time I feel that I am pledged, in some unaccountable way, to the fulfilment of a purpose. Ever since that night at Borden I know that a mysterious message has been delivered to me. Its commands I must obey. If you will not do what is needed I must seek some one else, and this some one must be, as you are, a descendant of the Bordens of Borden. To no one else can my message be delivered, and no one else shall do the work. If, then, I tell you what I have discovered, will you at least promise that if you do not carry the matter through you will not disclose what I have

ROBERGIA

told you, nor in any way interfere with the purpose I have in view?"

"To the making of that promise I have no objection," said Mr. Cook. "I will not disclose what you are about to tell me, and I will not interfere with your plans if I do not myself decide to carry them out. Is not that your decision also?" he continued, turning to his wife.

"It is," said Mrs. Cook; "but I hope you may be able to do what Miss W. wishes. I am sure I will help if I can."

"Very well," said Miss W. "With this understanding I will proceed," and taking a roll of manuscript from a small hand-bag which she had brought with her, she selected a paper on which was roughly drawn what appeared to be the ground plan of a church, the most prominent feature being the outline of a square tower of considerable size relatively to the proportions of the structure. Spreading this paper on the table, she began:

"You will recollect that after leaving the

ROBERGIA

church at Borden on the evening of my singular experience, which night is now just four weeks ago, I remained at the vicarage over night, and returned to London the next morning. You will not be surprised when I tell you that I slept but little. While lying awake, I went over the whole of the day's occurrences most carefully. Do what I would, I could not reason them away. There was only the continued iteration and reiteration so familiar to those with whom the hours that should be devoted to sleep become the theater of wakefulness. I went over and over my experience, as I have already said, and only to more thoroughly believe in the reality and significance of everything that had happened. At last my conclusions were made up, and a plan took definite shape in my mind. Curious to relate, no sooner had this result been reached than I fell asleep, and did not awaken until the sun, shining through the curtains, announced the new-born day. This day was Sunday, and there was but one

R O B E R G I A

train I could take. Leaving Borden at 10 o'clock by carriage, I could catch an up train at Sittingbourne, reaching London at 1 o'clock. Of course, my original intention of mailing my letter to you on Saturday afternoon, so as to catch the steamer at Queenstown, was no longer a possibility. But that by which I had been prevented was by far more important in its promised developments. Dressing hurriedly, I reached the dining-room just as breakfast was served, and after partaking of the meal, of which I must confess I ate but little, I again asked permission to look at the church, to which request the vicar smilingly assented, making some casual remark upon the attractions it seemed to have for me.

“I was soon again in the building, and went directly to the tower. I had no time to lose, for service would commence at 10.30 o'clock, and it was now past 9, and I had much to do. Taking my bearings, as nearly as I could, I located the spot on the west wall where I had seen the light the night

ROBERGIA

before, and began a close examination of its surface. The stones were of irregular length, but of the same width, making regular courses all around the inside tower wall. There was nothing visible on the first stone which I selected, and its neighbors on either side were equally barren of results; so was the stone immediately above it. I was much disappointed; and going back to my original position of the night before, I again recalled the circumstances, and tried again to locate the light. This time I noticed, from where I stood, a peculiarity in the stones. While they varied in length, they were approximately the same in other particulars. But on the second course from the floor I now noticed one stone that was at least twice as long as any of its neighbors, and this stone was directly under that which I had at first thought to be the one touched by the ghostly light which had startled me. As quickly as I could I reached this spot, which I have marked here"—pointing to

R O B E R G I A

the plan—"and began a critical examination of the surface of the stone, and was soon rewarded by the discovery of a Latin cross cut into its face, but almost obliterated by the wear and abrasions of what I judged were the 700 years which had passed since it was carved. After what had happened I could not doubt the significance of this discovery; but how should I interpret its meaning?

"Acting quickly, for I felt that intuition or inspiration was now a better guide than reason, I followed my first impulse, which was to examine the floor directly under the stone. This floor was also of stone, and I soon saw that, while it had been renewed in places, the original work had remained undisturbed along the side of the tower which I was examining. This was partly owing to the fact that the position of the door of entrance was such as to divert the course of travel away from this side of the tower, and partly because, as I was delighted to find, the particular stone in which

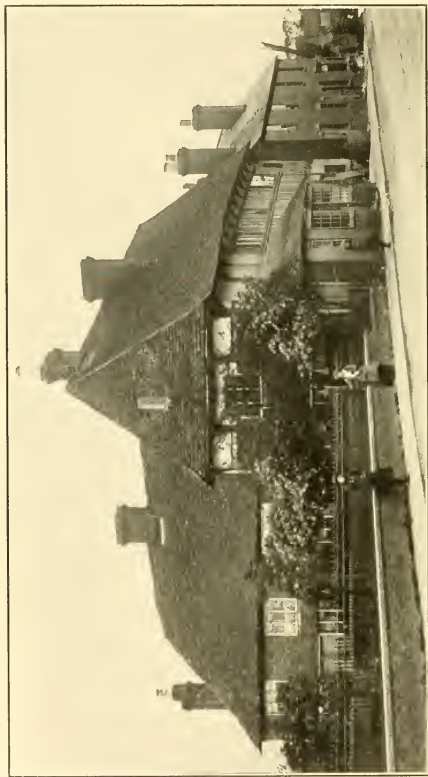
ROBERGIA

I was interested, and which you will see I have also marked on the plan, had been built into the wall, and was much larger than any of its fellows. Examining it more closely, I discovered a marked indentation which extended some four inches from the wall and at right angles with it. It was then lost in a depression, undoubtedly caused by the friction of the feet of the many generations that had come and gone over its surface.

“Using my penknife to remove the dirt in the cutting which I had found, I was soon warranted in the conclusion that it might have formed the shaft of an arrow pointing directly to the opposite wall, the head of which had been ground down and had disappeared with the creation of the depression I have already mentioned. Greatly excited, I measured the exact distance of the cross on the large stone from the angle of the walls, and applying the same measure to the east wall of the tower was delighted to find there, and in the sec-

ROBERGIA

ond course from the floor, a stone the exact counterpart of the one in the west wall on which the cross was cut. You will observe I have marked the position of this stone also. On its face there was an unmistakable indication that it had once borne, although faintly cut, an arrow-head. The conclusion was unavoidable. Whoever had cut the cross—a common emblem marking the corner-stones of churches of that day, as it does in our time—had the further purpose in mind of directing attention to the stone in the opposite wall. The arrow-head was missing from the shaft cut in the floor, as you will remember. It had never been there. It was, instead, cut on the stone of the east wall, which I had discovered. Behind that stone lies whatever there is of value. There we will find the Lady Robergia's history, and, I believe, her message also. I am not only firmly convinced you will discover what I suppose to be there, but that I am also commissioned to see that it reaches none but those for



HOME OF WILLIAM BORDEN, HEADCORN, 1450-1531.

[See Note I.]

ROBERGIA

whom it was intended; that is, her descendants. And now will you undertake to remove that stone and secure what I am sure you will find behind it?"

"Well," said Mr. Cook, "your story is a remarkable one; but what you propose is certainly trespass, and might be construed into burglary, or certainly larceny if we take anything away. Why not try the vicar or church authorities, and get permission to remove the stone?"

"I thought of that plan," said Miss W., "and rejected it. Whatever is found would be claimed by the church and stuffed into some museum or other. You see a manuscript of the thirteenth century found under such circumstances would be of great value, and a curiosity beyond comparison with anything of the kind I know of. Besides, it is impossible to do as you suggest. The Lady Robergia's message, if it be there, is to her descendants only. It is not, in any sense, the property of those who now have the church in charge. Seven hundred years

ROBERGIA

ago a church was built. Since then its custodians have changed in person perhaps fifty times, and, besides, the Church of England has taken it from the Church of Rome, to whom it was originally given. There is no ownership of right, and certainly none of sentiment, in those papers saving that which vests in the Bordens of to-day, of course taking it for granted that these are manuscripts of the character which I suppose."

"You reason the matter out pretty well," said Mr. Cook; "but that would not avail much in an English court in answer to a charge of trespass, or malicious mischief, or by whatever name the forcible entry and despoiling of a church might be called in this country. However, if the attempt is to be made under the conditions you affix it must be done without accomplices, and pretty much as you suggest. I will think the matter over. By the way," continued the speaker, "is the stone too large to be handled by one person should it be taken from the wall?"

ROBERGIA

“Although larger than its neighbors, it is not too heavy, and if, as I conjecture, a hollow has been cut in it to receive the leaden box, in which the parchment manuscript is undoubtedly sealed there will be just that much taken from its weight. I can also tell you that the mortar holding it is very friable and easily removed. I would suppose, however, that the better plan would be to remove the two smaller stones of the course immediately above it. The opening which holds the box, provided it is there, doubtless is in the top of the large stone, and the removal of those stones would uncover that which we are looking for. I have been so possessed by the scheme which I have disclosed to you that I have been in Borden again since my original visit, and I find the whole town is abed by 10 o’clock, and, what is more, the neighborhood of the church is absolutely deserted after nightfall. I am satisfied that in thirty minutes the stones could be removed and the papers secured.

ROBERGIA

It might take fifteen minutes more to restore the wall to its original condition and clean up the debris. I will give you the address of the driver who took me to and from Sittingbourne. He is entirely devoted to my interests because of a service I once did him when he was wrongfully accused of a theft from a passenger while he was a cab-driver in London. And now, recalling your pledge to me, I will say good night, and will call again on Tuesday evening to hear your decision. Meanwhile I will also leave the plan of the church with you."

After Miss W. had left, Mr. Cook had a quiet discussion of her proposition, partly with Mrs. Cook and partly with himself. The wife dissuaded, at first strongly, but finally only half-heartedly, and at the end actually suggested that the matter be looked into. Queer to say, Mr. Cook got into the same state of mind, and whatever the influences which possessed them, here were two sensible and respectable people actually

ROBERGIA

contemplating the commission of an act which it would be hard to excuse in the eye of the law, however plausible the explanation along the lines laid down by Miss W.

As Sunday followed the interview we have noted at such length, of course nothing could be done, but on Monday action was taken. Just what it was I may not say, but early on Tuesday morning a leaden box, cylindrical in shape and about six inches long and four inches in diameter, lay on a table in a room on the second floor of the Hotel Metropole, in London. A gentleman and a lady were contemplating it with great curiosity. It was apparently seamless, having been hammered together. On what appeared to be intended as the top was a coat-of-arms—the crest a lion rampant, holding a battle-axe, and the shield bearing a device which in all respects corresponded with the traditional Borden arms except in one quartering, and doubtless this was the quartering of the Lady Robergia's family, for neither of the ob-

ROBERGIA

servers had now any doubt as to who was the original owner of the box and the author of its contents. Curiosity as to that which it contained was unbounded, but it was decided to postpone the opening until Miss W. should arrive. Promptly at 8 o'clock the lady in question sent up her card, and her surprise can be imagined when she found the box already in the possession of those to whom she had given the time which had elapsed merely for the consideration of her proposal, not for an instant supposing the enterprise would be so speedily undertaken.

It was with something akin to awe that the ladies waited while Mr. Cook produced a small saw which he had procured that morning at a shop in the Strand, and began to carefully cut into the leaden cylinder along a line drawn around it at its largest diameter and at a point about one-fourth from its top. That the cover had been put on at this point was clearly evident from marks which were still visible. The lead

R O B E R T I A

was soft, and it did not take long to penetrate the outer shell, which was, however, fully three-eighths of an inch thick. Carefully working the saw while the ladies held the box, this cut was continued about two-thirds of the distance around, when Mr. Cook suddenly stopped his work—so suddenly, indeed, that the ladies let go of the box, and one of them (which one I shall not tell) gave a little shriek. The box itself would have fallen to the floor had not the gentleman caught it by a quick movement. That all of the party were greatly excited was evident, and even Mr. Cook had to wait a few moments before he regained his composure.

“We are about,” said he at last, “to uncover that which has remained secluded from the world for probably all of seven centuries ; for, unless every indication is at fault, this box and whatever it contains have lain in the east wall of the tower of the parish church of Borden since the beginning of the thirteenth century. The style

ROBERGIA

of architecture of the church, the condition of the wall and of the box itself prove this conclusively; but should there be a manuscript inside this ancient casket we shall have no need for conjecture, for it will speak for itself. It is, however, with the most peculiar feelings that I find myself face to face with the next and necessary step. Whether it was by man or woman, or for good or ill that this singular legacy was left to posterity, the thought is awe-inspiring that we are about to look upon something which last saw the light and was last an object of interest to and of actual contact with living beings like ourselves 700 years ago. I do not know what this casket may contain; but whoever placed it in that wall was gathered to his fathers and his dust mingled with that of our common mother hundreds of years before the new world was discovered, and when the language of Chaucer, of Spenser and of Shakespeare was as yet unformed. The circumstances which have led up to its dis-

ROBERGIA

covery also add to the sentiments which it inspires. It is, therefore, with a feeling of profound reverence that I shall bend back the cover of this leaden shell and disclose the secret which has been entrusted to its keeping by this knight or lady, this priest or penitent of the long ago. Whoever it may have been, may God grant to him or to her, and to us as well, a merciful judgment in the world to come, and such knowledge of our duty in this world as may lead to its reasonable and faithful discharge."

Carefully and with reverent hands the lead was bent back along the line of the cutting which had been made. Equally fearful of finding the shell empty or occupied—for if there was nothing, what a disappointment! and if there was a manuscript what should its purport be?—the three observers looked into the little box, the interior of which was now visible. It took but a glance to show that it was not empty, for a cylinder of yellow cloth lay coiled within the leaden receptacle, nearly filling

ROBERGIA

it. With great difficulty, and after much care, this roll was removed to the hard, smooth surface of the mahogany table. The outside wrappings had evidently been of well-oiled linen. How many there were of these wrappings our intensely interested examiners could not tell, for the cloth, emitting a peculiar odor, fell to pieces wherever touched, so that soon there was nothing left of the outside wrappings but a pile of yellow dust, with some shreds of fiber. The inside roll, or contents, however, seemed more substantial, and appeared to be covered with a substance like clay. Upon carefully applying the blade of a knife, this also dissolved into dust, and was with ease removed. That it had originally been wax was discovered afterwards. Every one was intent upon the inside roll, which, now that it was completely uncovered, could plainly be seen to be parchment.

Miss W., until now no more excited than the rest of the party, and who had not said a word since the lid of the box had

ROBERGIA

been bent back, exclaimed excitedly: "I knew it! I knew it! A manuscript on parchment! But be careful. Have you writing materials?" and then speaking to Mr. Cook, "ring quickly for pen, ink and paper, and give me the box."

Taking the box, she placed it carefully over the parchment roll, covering it, as it lay on the table, with her woolen wrap, which I noticed she selected from among other articles in the room capable of the same use, because it had been hanging before the fire burning in the grate, and was therefore free from any suspicion of dampness. It took but a few minutes to give the order for writing materials and to receive them; but during those few minutes I thought Miss W. would go out of her mind. She tramped up and down the room, opened the door a half-dozen times, and once actually ran some fifty feet down the corridor, all the time exclaiming: "How foolish that we were not prepared! Why, oh why does he not come with the

R O B E R G I A

paper and ink?" So that when the waiter did return the whole party was in a condition of mind bordering on frenzy.

"Now," said Miss W., "we will know whether all our labor has been for nought, or whether the dead of the days of the Crusades will be allowed, through our efforts, to deliver the message which has been left for those who should come after them, even to the twentieth generation."

Taking off the covers, which it was plain had been put over the roll to keep the air from it, Miss W. began to unwind the parchment. "Write," she said to Mr. Cook, who had established himself at the other side of the table, while Mrs. Cook stood looking over Miss W.'s shoulder. "Fortune favors us," she continued. "This is in the bastard Latin of the twelfth century, but it is well done and I know the characters. Write quickly," she said, "and do not lose any time."

And this is what she read as she carefully unrolled the old manuscript, and this

ROBERGIA

is what the gentleman wrote on that night in the beginning of August, in room 112, on the first floor of the Hotel Metropole, which is in Northumberland Avenue, London :

THE MANUSCRIPT FOUND IN THE EAST
WALL OF THE PARISH CHURCH AT
BORDEN, KENT, ENGLAND.

TRANSLATED BY MISS W., OF LONDON.

It is by the grace of God alone that I am what I am, and through the merits of His dear Son, my Lord and Master, can I alone hope for life hereafter and forgiveness for my many sins. His blessings and gifts to me have been many and far beyond my deserving. That it may be accounted worthy in His sight that I have purposed the building of a church to His honor and for the services of His true and only religion, is my humble prayer, and that He may vouchsafe the accomplishment of my purpose is my most comfortable hope. And I also pray that He may bless my

ROBERGIA

further purpose with His favor and to the good of those who may come after me. My two boys, which the Lord has given me, are always in my thoughts. Simon, weak and sickly, may not see man's estate. Richard, like the great king from whom he took his name, will be a man of iron—strong in war ; but God and our lady grant that he shall be wise and peaceful also, for war brings sorrow and suffering, as the women of England and of my line know full well. It is from him that the Borden line shall proceed, and it is to his descendants, in what age and what land I know not, that I must deliver this message.

It is now 154 years since Count William of Normandy defeated and killed the great Harold, King of England, on the woeful day of Hastings. There fell also Ethelwolf, my Saxon ancestor, my dear mother's grandfather and the lord of all the lands which the Norman Conqueror gave to his vassal, Francis de Bourdon, whose grandson, Sir Simon de Bourdon, in the strange

ROBERGIA

chances of life and war, became my father. In the veins of my children—Simon, who will die, as the leech sayeth, and Richard, who will live—is therefore the mingled blood of Norman and of Saxon. I love my children, and may not I, the Lady Robergia, the daughter of Elfrida of Kent and of Sir Simon de Bourdon of Bourdon, and the wife of Sir Francis de Bourdon, erstwhile by marriage with me, lord of all the lands of Bourdon, love those who may come after me, and take account of their welfare and leave to them the message which my sorrows have taught me, and which love for my children's children leads me to give them?

The land of England is indeed in travail. The hand of the Norman is everywhere raised against the Saxon, and the Saxon stands ready to avenge the wrongs done his forefathers. It is war and not peace; injustice and not righteousness; pride and not humble desire to fulfil the laws of God and of religion that I everywhere see. The

ROBERGIA

Saxon tills the soil; the Norman robs him of his rights and of the fruits of his labors. The Norman cannot yield; the Saxon will not; and yet if the dear England which I love is ever to be at peace at home and great abroad, these two must come together. It was but last month that my husband had the thumb cut off the right hand of one of my Saxon serfs because he had killed a stag in the forest, vowing that he should never draw arrow in long bow again. And yesterday a shaft was brought me, which was found quivering in an oak just beyond the moat, and which old Ursula tells me had grazed the cap of my son who was walking there with her. And Gurth, the son of him who was so cruelly mutilated by my husband, I doubt not shot the arrow, for they say he left last night to join Robin Hood in the great Sherwood Forest. And so those who should live together and who, once together, would make England great, do nought but harm to each other—the Norman proud, hasty and unjust; the

ROBERGIA

Saxon stolid, revengeful and unwilling to forget.

And yet in all my sorrows and anxieties it has been given me to see a future for England out of which a greatness shall grow, not less because of her power than because of her righteousness, and it is upon the descendants of my son, Richard de Bourdon, who is fourth in the line from Sir Francis de Bourdon, who was himself descended from the de Bourdons of Bayeux, in Normandy, that I charge this duty, out of which alone can good come now or hereafter, that they be true, just and merciful. And upon whomsoever shall find this parchment, written by myself—for with great labor hath my confessor, the good Monk Athelstan, taught me the mysteries of chirography and the art of illumination—I charge that they deliver it to the descendants of my son, Richard de Bourdon, of Bourdon, and that in their day and generation they shall remember to serve God and His dear Son, and be

ROBERGIA

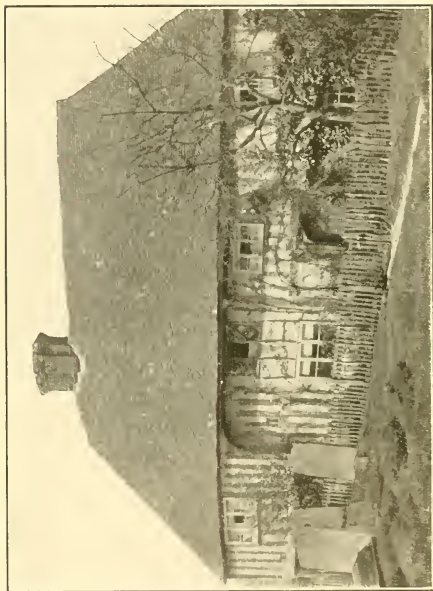
TRUE—to friendship and to God, for Truth is all of this life worth the having, and perfect Truth is what the Life to come shall reveal to us. It is the Prince of Darkness that is the Prince of Lies.

BE JUST—for the Lord has only loaned us that which we have, whether of goods or of talents, and in their use we must consider the rights of all men.

BE MERCIFUL—for we shall have no greater claim to the mercy we all shall finally need than that we forgave our brother's faults.

And this hath the Lady Robergia de Bourdon herself written in the year of our Lord 1210.

The reading came to an end, and with it the scratching of pen on paper ceased. The clock on the mantelpiece, almost at the instant, struck midnight; but there was no other sound. For fully five minutes no one spoke; and then Miss W., turning over the parchment sheet, said sorrowfully, "It is as



HOME OF MARGARET READER, HEADCORN, 1583.

[See Note J.]

ROBERGIA

I feared;" and as Mr. and Mrs. Cook looked, they saw that the letters at the beginning of the manuscript had almost disappeared, while those last uncovered in the unwinding were also fast fading away.

"This is why I was in such haste to secure paper and ink," said Miss W. "There was, at the time this was written, an ink which could be used and which was permanent so long as the air did not reach it. Upon exposure it almost immediately lost color. The Lady Robergia evidently feared this paper might be construed as treasonable to the Norman conquerors if found during her lifetime. In such case the fading of the writing would have made it useless as testimony against her to the possible confiscation of her estate. As to posterity, she evidently decided to take chances. Fortunately, we have a correct transcription, and you now have an authentic account of the de Bourdons from the time of their leaving Normandy. I need not say that it is the most extraordinary

ROBERGIA

affair with which I have ever been connected, and I at last feel absolved from the task which I certainly at the time felt had been put upon me by ghostly influence. But tell me," she continued, "how did you get the box?"

"I think," said Mr. Cook, "that I said I could not tell you, and I must leave you to draw your own conclusions. I may tell you, however," he said, "that someone was in Borden last night, and was greatly surprised to see the same light on the west wall which so startled you. It was, however, a ray of moonlight admitted through one of the lancet windows cut in the east wall of the tower. You will recall that the moon was almost exactly in the same position yesterday as on the night you were there, that being about four weeks or, to be accurate, twenty-nine days ago. The flickering you noticed was doubtless caused by the movements of the limbs of a tree which stands in the churchyard a short distance from the tower, and which was moved

ROBERGIA

by the wind accompanying the storm, which afterwards obscured the moon entirely and left you and the church in darkness.”

“Nevertheless,” said Miss W., “there was a Lady Robergia, and yourself and Mrs. Cook are her descendants.”

THE END.

A d d e n d a



PEDIGREE OF

BORDEN OF HEDCORN,
COUNTY OF KENT, ENGLAND, AND OF PORTSMOUTH,
RHODE ISLAND.

HENRY BORDEN, of Hedcorn, County Kent. — ROBERGIA.
Born circa 1370.

THOMAS BORDEN, of Hedcorn, County Kent. — ISABELLA.
Died before 26th of April, 1469.

JOHN BORDEN, of Hedcorn, County Kent. — BENETT, TORNOR.
Will dated 1469. Will dated 1518.

WILLIAM BORDEN, of Hedcorn, County Kent.
Will dated 1531.

EDMUND BORDEN, of Hedcorn, County Kent. — MARGARET.
Will dated 1539.

WILLIAM BORDEN, of Hedcorn, County Kent. — JOAN.
Will dated 1557.

THOMAS BORDEN, of Hedcorn, County Kent. — MARGARET READER.
Died 1592.

MATHEW BORDEN, of Hedcorn, County Kent. — JOAN.
Died 1620.

RICHARD BORDEN, of Hedcorn, County Kent. — JANE FOWLE.
Baptized 22d of February, 1595-6. Married 28th of September, 1625. Removed
to New England; settled at Portsmouth, R. I. Descendants removed to Monmouth
County, N. J.

seven sons and two daughters.
Of these

JOHN BORDEN
Married

b. New Hanover, N. J., July 13, 1819.
d. Moorestown, N. J., July 5, 1892.

Sarah Ann Emley;
had three sons and three daughters.
Of these

Daughter of Major JOSEPH EMLEY;
b. September 22, 1795.
d. July, 1871.
Emma (died in infancy), Lavinia, Winfield, Joseph, John and Florence.

LAVINIA BORDEN
Married

March 16, 1868.

Richard Y. Cook;
had one son,

b. February 25, 1845.

GUSTAVUS WYNNE
Cook
Married

b. December 12, 1868.

Nancy Munford Bright;
had (1904) two daughters

NANCY WYNNE COOK
LAVINIA EMLEY COOK

Aaron Robbins, Mary Robbins, Apollo W., Edward, Charles, George W., Samuel and John.

The Borden family were natives of Kent, and descended from Simon de BOURDON, of the reign of Henry II, who gave the ground for the parish church of Borden, in the seventh year of the reign of King John, A.D. 1206, and for whom the parish was named.

RICHARD BORDEN

b. Kent, England, 1595.
d. Portsmouth, R. I., May 25, 1671.

Married

Joan Fowle; had seven sons and three daughters.
Of these

b. 1604.
d. July 15, 1688.

Daughter of Francis Fowle, of Cranbrooke, Kent, England.

FRANCIS BORDEN

Married

April 12, 1677,
Jane Vickers;

had three sons and one daughter.
Of these

b. Kent, England.
d. Monmouth County, East Jersey, January 19, 1705-6.

Thomas, Francis, Mary (married John Cooke), Matthew, John (married December 25, 1670, Mary Earle), Joseph, Sarah, Samuel, Benjamin and Aney.

FRANCIS BORDEN 2d

Married

Mary ———; had four sons and four daughters.
Of these

b. September 1, 1678.

Elizabeth, Jane, Francis, John, Amy, Mary, Thomas and James.

FRANCIS BORDEN 3d

Married

Lydia Woolly; had three sons and three daughters.
Of these

b. Shrewsbury, December 14, 1709.
d. October, 1784.

Joseph, Thomas, Francis, Lydia, Hannah and Rhoda.

FRANCIS BORDEN 4th

Married

Elizabeth Parker; had six sons and three daughters.
Of these

b. Shrewsbury, about 1740.
b. November 14, 1745.
d. February 27, 1788.

JOSIAH BORDEN

Married

b. 1709.
d. New Hanover, March 2, 1826.

William, Josiah, Daniel, Asher, Sarah, Elizabeth, Frances, Edward and Samuel.

Mary Robbins;

b. February 13, 1779.
d. September, 1861.

Daughter of AARON ROBBINS.

b. February 25, 1826, who was son of.

had

SAMUEL ROBBINS.

b. d. 1760, who was son of

AARON ROBBINS.

b. May 24, 1683.
d. April, 1759, who was son of

DANIEL ROBBINS.

b. 1640.
d. July, 1714.

seven sons and two daughters.
Of these

JOHN BORDEN

Married

b. New Hanover, N. J., July 13, 1819.
d. Moorestown, N. J., July 5, 1892.

Aaron Robbins, Mary Robbins, Apollo W., Edward, Charles, George W., Samuel and John.

Sarah Ann Emley;

had three sons and three daughters.
Of these

b. August 25, 1819,
d. Moorestown, N. J., December 15, 1888.

Daughter of Major JOSEPH EMLEY b. September 22, 1735.
d. July, 1871.
Emma (died in infancy), Lavinia, Winfield, Joseph, John and Florence

LAVINIA BORDEN

Married

March 16, 1868.

Richard Y. Cook;

had one son,

b. February 25, 1845

GUSTAVUS WYNNE

Cook

Married
Nancy Munson Bright;
had (1894) two daughters

b. December 12, 1868.

NANCY WYNNE

Cook

LAVINIA EMLEY COOK

PEDIGREE OF
BORDEN OF BORDEN AND HEDCORN
COUNTY OF KENT.

*Compiled from Researches made and Records Copied at
the Instance of RICHARD Y. COOK, of
Philadelphia, Pa., U. S. A.*

PEDIGREE OF RICHARD BORDEN,
Who removed from the Parish of Hedcorn in the County
of Kent, England, to Portsmouth, Rhode
Island, America.

I. HENRY BORDEN, of the Parish of
Hedcorn, County of Kent, born about the year
1370-1380.

He appears to have held land both in Hedcorn
and at Borden, and was doubtless a descendant
of the Bordens, of Borden. He is mentioned
in the will of his grandson, John Borden, of
Hedcorn, which will is dated 26 April, 1469,
recorded in the Archdeaconry of Canterbury,
Vol. II, folio 1, wherein his grandson, the said
John Borden, of Hedcorn, desires that a priest
sing in the Church of Hedcorn for his (the said

A D D E N D A

Henry Borden's) soul, and the soul of Robergia, wife of the said Henry Borden, for two years.

Henry Borden, of Hedcorn, had issue by the said Robergia his wife :

II. THOMAS BORDEN, of the Parish of Hedcorn, County of Kent. He is mentioned in the will of his son, John Borden, of Hedcorn, who desires that a priest sing in the Church of Hedcorn, wherein he was buried, for his soul, and that of his wife, Isabella.

The Bordens acquired their land in Hedcorn after 38 Hen. III. (See Extent of Hedcorn.) Note that William Borden, died 1531, still held land at Borden.

This Thomas Borden was without question identical with Thomas Borden (or Burden), of Hedcorn, who joined the Rebellion of the Kentishmen under Jack Cade in the year 1450, and who was subsequently pardoned therefor. (Pat. Rolls, 28 Hen. VI, parts 2, 13, etc. Also *Archæologia Cantiana*, Vol. VII.)

This Thomas Borden died before 26 April, 1469, leaving issue by Isabella, his wife :

1. JOHN; of whom presently.
2. Henry.
3. Richard.

ADDENDA

III. JOHN BORDEN, of the Parish of Hedcorn, in the County of Kent. His will is dated 26 April, 1469, but there is no date of probate.

WILL OF JOHN BORDEN, OF HEDCORN, COUNTY OF KENT.

26 April, 1469.—I, JOHN BORDEN, of Hedcorn.

To be buried in the cemetery of the Church of St. Peter & St. Paul in Hedcorn.

To each of my grandchildren (not named) 4d. The rest of my goods to Thomas Hovyn-den, Richard Borden & John Holstrete, Executors.

My wife Benett (Benedict) to have the use of part of my house during her widowhood.

My Executors to occupy my lands, &c., until William my son attains his age of twenty.

If my son & daughters all die, then if the said Richard Borden have a son he shall have all my lands, &c., which were of my father (not named), to hold the same to him and his heirs for ever.

I will that an honest Priest sing in the Church

A D D E N D A

of Hedcorn for the souls of Thomas my father, Isabella my mother, Henry Borden my grandfather & Robergia his wife, & Thomas Saunder, for 2 years; he is to be paid 20 marks. (Arch. Cant., Vol. II, folio 1, Latin.)

John Borden married Benett Tornor, daughter of Thomas Tornor.

WILL OF BENETT BORDEN, OF HEDCORN,—
WIDOW.

15 October, 1518.—I, BENETT BORDEN, widow.

To be buried in the Churchyard of Hedcorn.

To William my son, 40s.

To Joan my daughter, 40s.

To Isabella my daughter & her child, 6s. 8d.

To Robergia my daughter, 6s. 8d.

To John Borden, a calf.

To Alice Borden, 3s. 4d.

To Roger my son, the house, garden & 2 pieces of land I had by inheritance after the death of Thomas Tornor my father.

The rest of my goods to the said Roger, whom I make executor.

Peter Wothingbroke to be overseer.

A D D E N D A

Witnesses: John Cornforth, Curate, Thomas Batnor.

Proved 16 Nov., 1518. (Arch. Cant., Vol. XIII, Section 8.)

John Borden, of Hedcorn, had issue by Benett, his wife:

1. WILLIAM; of whom presently.
2. Joan.
3. Isabella.
4. Robergia.
5. John.
6. Alice.
7. Roger.

IV. WILLIAM BORDEN, son of John and Benett his wife, of the Parish of Hedcorn, in the County of Kent. He was under age 26 April, 1469; died 1531. His first wife was named Joan, and his second Thomasin, and they were both buried *within* the Church of Hedcorn. His third wife, named Rose, survived him.

WILL OF WILLIAM BORDEN, OF HEDCORN.

11 February, 1531.—I, WILLIAM BORDEN, of Hedcorn.

To be buried *within* the Church of Our Lady between my 2 wives Joan and Thomasin.

ADDENDA

To Elizabeth my daughter, a standing
"Nutte" with silver & gilt & a cover.

To Anne my daughter, £20.

Walter Hendeley, gent; William Lynche &
Nicholas Batnor to be Executors, & Sir Edward
Wotten, Knight, Overseer.

To Katherine my daughter, my messuage, 2
gardens, a forstall, 3 pieces of land formerly
called Southlands, & 2 pieces of land called Ryng-
sell, purchased of Sir William Ketlesden, for-
merly Vicar of Hedcorn; for default of heirs to
the said Katherine, the same to remain to my
son Thomas & his heirs for ever.

The feoffees to let to farm my 2 meadows
lying to the church bridge upon the den of Cro-
thenden the which by stryken out of a pair of
indentures between Edward Borden & me, &
the profits thereof to be given in deeds of charity.

I will that Edward Borden my son hold him-
self content with my tenement of Borden with
100 acres of land & meadow & my tenement at
Wike, with such lands as he holds of me by
indenture under a "false pretence of marriage
of Johane daughter of John Aleyn, Baron of the
Exchequer."

ADDENDA

I will that Rose my wife occupy my principal messuage Horcheyard Podsole, a tenement & piece of land called Borowfyld, she keeping Thomas and Anne my children.

My feoffees to let 2 pieces of land called Ketes & Somerlese with all my other lands lying on the north side of the street leading from Hedcorn to Levenham, &c., &c., until my son Thomas attain the age of 24 years.

To the said Thomas I give a piece of land containing 10 acres called Pikesfelde, "lying to the hall dore of his brother Edward's hall dore." Proved 25 Sept., 1531. (Arch. Cant., Vol. XIX, Section 10.)

Children of William Borden, of Hedcorn:

1. EDMUND; of whom presently. He is not mentioned in will and was, therefore, eldest son. English wills of this date rarely mention the eldest son and heir, who inherited by entail, according to Act of Parliament. The System of Gavel Kind was of course practiced to a great extent in Kent, but in this case it appears that the descendants of this Edmund Borden held the lands formerly belonging to William Borden, father of this Edmund, and to John, his grandfather. The evidence of descent is therefore clear and complete.
2. Edward.
3. Thomas.

ADDENDA

4. Elizabeth.
5. Anne.
6. Katherine.

V. EDMUND BORDEN, of the Parish of Hedcorn, in the County of Kent, son of WILLIAM, born about the year 1485; died in the same Parish about the month of June, 1539. He married Margaret ———.

WILL OF EDMUND BORDEN, OF HEDCORN.

Dated 13 April, 30 Hen. 8 (1539).—"I, EDMUND BORDEN, of Hedcorn, in the Shire of Kent."

To be buried in the churchyard of Hedcorn.

To my daughters Joan & Maryon, £5 each.

To my daughters Margaret, Alice & Julian, £5 each at their ages of 20 years.

To Margaret, my wife, 3 kine, etc.

The residue of my goods to Edward, John & William, my sons.

If my wife have a "woman chylde" then I give to the said child £5.

I make Thomas Madocke & John Phylyke, executors.

Witnesses: John Lytle, Edward Newenden, Thomas Wood.

ADDENDA

Proved, 18 June, 1539. (Archdeaconry of Canterbury, Vol. XXI, Section 9.)

Children of Edmund Borden and Margaret his Wife:

1. Edward.
2. John.
3. WILLIAM; of whom presently.
4. Joan.
5. Maryon.
6. Margaret.
7. Alice.
8. Julian.

VI. WILLIAM BORDEN, son of EDMUND and MARGARET, of Hedcorn, was born in that Parish circa 1520(15?); died there about the month of June, 1557. He married Joan ———.

WILL OF WILLIAM BORDEN (BURDEN), OF
HEDCORN.

(No date.) To Joan, my wife, £20, &c.

To my sons, Thomas & Edward, £10 each;
to my son John £6, & to my son Stephen £10.

To Elizabeth, my daughter, £3.6.8; to my
daughter Thomesyn a cow; to my daughter
Anne a cow.

To Edmond, my son, a cow.

My wife Joan & son Edward to be Executors.

ADDENDA

The residue of my goods I give to my said wife & sons.

Witnesses: John Kippinge, Nicholas Borden & Nicholas Hammersham.

Proved 8 June, 1557. (Archdeaconry of Cant., Vol. XXX, Section 3.)

Children of William Borden and Joan his Wife:

1. THOMAS; of whom presently.
2. Edward (Edmund), of Hedcorn Parish, County of Kent. His will in abstract is as follows:
28 January, 1559. "I, Edward Borden, of Hedcorn.
"Margaret, my wife, to be executrix.
"To Stephen Borden my brother £17.6.0,
given to him by my father (not named).
"To my mother (not named) 20s.
"To Thomas & Edward (Edmund) Borden, my brothers, 20s. each.
"To John Borden (no relationship given), 20s.
"To my sisters, Thomasin, Agnes & Elizabeth, 10s. each."

Legacies to John, Thomas & Christopher Batnor, & to Alice Warner.

Witnesses: John Kyppyn, Nicholas Boodes & Nicholas Homersham. (See his father's will.) Proved 26 March, 1560. (Arch. Cant., Vol. XXXIV, Section 5.)

3. John (doubtless the John Borden mentioned in will of Edward, his brother, but relationship not there set forth.)
4. Edmund (Edward).

ADDENDA

5. Stephen; named in will of his brothers Edward and Thomas Borden, but not in will of his father.
6. Elizabeth; she was living 1592, and named in will of her brother Thomas (which see).
7. Agnes; named in will of her brother Edward.
8. Thomasin; named in will of her brother Edward.

VII. THOMAS BORDEN, born in the Parish of Hedcorn, County Kent, circa 1540; died there about the month of April, 1592. He was buried in Hedcorn Church 21 April, 1592. His wife's name is not known, but she was buried in Hedcorn Church, 20 May, 1581. He appears to have married, 2dly, Margaret Reader (1583), who was buried 25 Sept., 1589. She was daughter of the Vicar of the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul at Hedcorn.

WILL OF THOMAS BORDEN, OF HEDCORN,
COUNTY KENT, YEOMAN.

I, THOMAS BORDEN, of Hedcorn, in County Kent, yeoman.

To be buried in the Churchyard of Hedcorn.

To my daughter Agnes, wife of Jonas Gorham, £10, &c.

To my brother Stephen Borden, £4.

ADDENDA

To my sister Elizabeth Borden, £4.

The rest of my goods to my son Mathew Borden, whom I make Executor.

Witnesses: John Fotherbie & Edward Meles, Thomas Travant.

Proved 26 April, 1592. "The hand mark of Thomas Borden." (Arch. Cant., Vol. XLVIII, folio 279.)

Children of Thomas Borden and ——— his wife:

1. MATHEW; of whom presently.
2. Thomas; buried at Hedcorn Church, 30 April, 1580.
3. Joan; buried at Hedcorn Church, 5 April, 1571.
4. Agnes; married Jonas Gorham, 2 Aug., 1585.

VIII. MATHEW BORDEN, son of Thomas, born in the Parish of Hedcorn, County Kent. He died there about the month of October, 1620. He married Joan ———. He was Churchwarden of Hedcorn, 1598. (There was another Mathew, Churchwarden earlier, perhaps an uncle.)

WILL OF MATHEW BORDEN, OF HEDCORN,
COUNTY KENT, YEOMAN.

26 September, 1620. I, MATHEW BORDEN, of Hedcorn, in County Kent, Yeoman.

ADDENDA

To Joane, my wife, beds, &c. ; also £8 yearly out of my farm called Sim Hamdens in the Parish of Smarden in Co. Kent, till my son John attain the age of 21 ; also the rent of my houses in Hedcorn ; also of my farm called Grinnett in Hedcorn ; also the rent of my tenement wherein Roger Jones dwells until my son Edward attain the age of 21.

To my daughter Amye Borden, £60 at her age of 20.

To my daughter Mary, wife of John Rowe, £16.

To my son Richard, my 2 houses & land thereto belonging in Hedcorn, to hold to him and his heirs forever.

To my son William, £40 ; also a house & land at Smarden.

My sons Richard & William to be Executors.

Thomas Samson, of Cranbroke, to be Supervisor.

Proved 27 October, 1620. (Arch. Cant., Book 63 [Hall], folio 134.)

Children of Mathew Borden and Joan his Wife:

1. Mary, married, 4 May, 1620, John Roe (Rowe).

A D D E N D A

2. Joan, bapt. 29 April, 1593; buried 11 June, 1593.
3. John, bapt. 28 April, 1594.
4. Richard, bapt. 22 February, 1595/6; married 28 September, 1625, Jane Fowle. Removed to New England, where he died.
5. William, bapt. 1 June, 1600.
6. Amie, bapt. 26 April, 1603.
7. Edward, bapt. 14 April, 1605.
8. John, bapt. 22 February, 1606/7.

Register of Hedcorn Parish Church.

*Children of Richard Borden Baptized in England.
(Hedcorn Regtr.)*

Richard, bapt. 9 July, 1626.

Thomas, bapt. 3 October, 1627.

Descriptive Notes.

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES.

NOTE A.

This ancient and memorable oak, one of the largest in England, is doubtless the last remaining scion of the old forest of Andred, or Anderida, which, in Roman and Saxon times, extended some sixty miles in length and twenty to forty in breadth, and covered the whole of the wealden of the counties of Kent, Surrey and Sussex. Its trunk is some 45 feet in circumference at 6 feet above the soil, and its partly dead and hollow branches protruding from its still leafy center in every direction, with the open, hollow heart and almost rocky appearance on the south side, give an impression of vast age and antiquity to this solitary tree. Its genus, botanically, is undoubtedly the indigenous old English oak, *Quercus robur*, with acorns and footstalks longer than those of the other variety known as *Quercus sessifolia*. Also this kind of oak is much longer lived and its timber more lasting

NOTES

than any other. This fact, no doubt, accounts for its present existence. Lord Brabourne, in one of his entertaining books, written for young people, "The Witches of Headcorn," has dubbed it "*St. Dunstan's Oak*," but wherefore is not known, although Dunstan of Satanic renown was no doubt a denizen of the weald, that country of deep clays, grass and wheat. Finally, its twisted and knarly trunk and branches and horizontal boughs give an impression of sovereignty and dignity, although decayed. Says Spenser:

" . . . dry and dead,
Still clad with reliques of its trophies old,
Lifting to heaven its aged, hoary head,
Whose foot on earth hath got but feeble hold. . . . "

NOTE B.

Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Borden, Kent.

This ancient Norman church is built of flint with quoins of stone. It has a nave with north and south aisles, a chancel, west tower and south porch, a tiled roof with a parapet on the south part. The walls are buttressed with stone and flint. Against the south wall is a sun-dial, on which are these words:

NOTES

“Fast flies the hour, fast flies the day,
And quickly measures life away.”

The tower is of flint, without buttresses, and is lighted in the upper portion with two lights. It has a beautiful west doorway of late Norman date, with soffit of three cylindrical roll mouldings; also a fine perpendicular window westward, with stained glass, and in the basement are two deeply splayed Norman windows also in the west portion. The south doorway of the church has good mouldings and a hood. The porch is of flint with two windows with trefoiled single lights. The nave has a plastered roof carried on the beams. The piers are massive and have inverted impost mouldings with shafts in the angles. The south aisle has a flat roof on beams lying on stone brackets, with two perpendicular windows. The eastern part of this aisle has a boarded roof with massive moulded arched ribs. This portion is lighted by two decorated and one perpendicular windows, with also one lancet. There is a tablet to Robert Plot, LL.D., the historian of Oxford and Staffordshire, on which is a winged warrior sculptured, holding a spear of wood tipped with iron. He is treading on

NOTES

what is probably a representation of the Devil, who has wings, a bull's head and human arms. The north aisle has a flattened roof and is lighted by four good windows. The font is new, but there is the bowl of an old unused one with five plain faces, while on the sixth face are the letters "B. D." and a curious sculptured design. (Tradition has it that these letters stand for "Bor-Den.") Both aisles extend as far eastward as the chancel.

It has a stone reredos with arches supported by small marble shafts. There is a curious ancient piscina. The stone pulpit has two arches on shafts with floriated capitals, on which are figures of SS. Peter and Paul, to whom the church is dedicated (as is also that of Headcorn). There is a peal of eight bells. The registers date from 1555, and there is a fine service of old communion plate.

NOTE C.

Headcorn, in the weald of Kent, is situated in what is now Mid Kent, but a portion is in the division of East Kent. It is nine miles from the county town of Maidstone and forty-five from

NOTES

London. Anciently, it was written Hedecrune, Hedycron, Hedecrone and Hedcron. Philipot, in 1659, says it was "a place famous for the best and chief corn and largest poultry;" and Harris, who published his "History of Kent" in 1719, says it was "a place where corn was heedfully sown." A third and better explanation of the derivation of its name might be given. "Heda," or "Hede," was a name not uncommon among the Danes, of whom many we know settled in England, and the affix "cron" signifying a place; *i. e.*, Hede's cron, or dwelling. Cron is common in the North of Europe, as Cronheim, Cronberg, Cronstadt, Carlscona, etc. This certainly explains its name, and we find it called "Hedecron" in the time of Henry VI (1450). It was not mentioned in "Domesday Book" (1086), nor were many others, as Biddenden, Tenterden, etc. After the conquest the weald became apportioned out to different manors and religious houses, and from a wild forest gradually became cleared and more or less cultivated. Furley, in his "Annals of Headcorn," says: "This sequestered spot remained nameless as a ville, hamlet or dene, as far as I have been able to discover even

NOTES

at the times of the Norman Conquest." On Hundred Roll of 1273 under Hundred of Eyborne, we find "The Dene of Hedycrone with the advowson of the *church* of the same was the demesne of the King Henry, father of the present King, who gave them to his hospital of Ospringe in perpetual alms." The denes, or in Saxon denherd, were swine pastures in the weald granted as appurtenances of different manors, etc., as before stated.

NOTE D.

This view gives a fair idea of the appearance of the village street when viewed from the summit of the church tower looking eastward. It has excellent roads with good water and a complete system of drainage, now (1904) being inaugurated. The churchyard is well filled with memorials of those who have passed away. The River Beult winds through its meadows to the right of the view, while to the left rises the mill bank, with its old windmills and the road to Maidstone, which passes over it. At the farther end of the street eastward is the railway station on the direct Southeastern Continental Line by

NOTES

which ingress and egress are now easy. The ancient Cloth Hall of fine oaken timber still stands, and is a good dwelling-house.

NOTE E.

This fine old church, built of Kentish rag and Bethersden marble, and dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul, with its ancient oak adjoining, is of great interest to the archæologist and lover of natural history. Hussey, who wrote in 1852, thus described it: "A church of nave and chancel; vestry on north side of the same, with south aisle and chancel; south porch with a parvise and square west tower, with battlements and staircase. The aisle also has battlements and a stair turret. The building is generally perpendicular, though possibly the walls may be earlier. There are many imperfect remains of colored glass. Font perpendicular octagon, with angels, etc., on the sides; some portions of a fine perpendicular screen are preserved," etc.

"There is," says Sir S. Glynne, in his "Notes on Churches of Kent," "beneath one of the south windows a fine perpendicular tomb in the wall (probably one of the Colepepers) rising

NOTES

above the window-sill, and having an embattled cornice." Weever, in 1631, says: "The Church of Headcorn was founded by one of the Colepepers, who (says Harris, 1719) were lords of the manor." This is corroborated by Hasted. In the Lady Chapel, which was doubtless part of a more ancient church, is an ancient piscina and a tomb which would appear from his will (A. D. 1531) to have been the burial place of William Borden, between his wives Joan and Thomasine, from which, as in many other cases, the brass has been removed. There is clear evidence that a church existed at Headcorn in 24th Henry III, A. D. 1239, and that its patronage was in the hands of the Crown, who gave it to the Hospital of St. Mary at Ospringe. In the taxation of Pope Nicholas, A. D. 1291, a crusade levy was made, when the vicarage of De Hedecrone was returned as under the See of Canterbury. These are, we may take, sufficient evidences of the age of a church at this place. No doubt the most early existent portion is that of the chancel and Lady Chapel, the nave, tower and south aisle having since been added, and their erection must have been about A. D. 1430.

NOTES

The junction of the two buildings is plainly to be seen, when looking from the tower on the roof below, the splay of the roof and eastern direction of same showing the difference. This must have been during the life of Thomas Burden, yeoman, participant with Cade and Culpeper in the rebellion of that time, and who afterwards received pardon. (See State papers, Henry VI, Arch. Cant., Vol. VII.) The oak must then have been a tree in full vigor of growth.

NOTE F.

The nave of the church, with its exceedingly fine old oak roof, which is without doubt the same erected about A. D. 1430, and still in an admirable state of preservation, and a complete specimen of the almost everlasting kind of timber which is furnished by the native oak, *Quercus robur*. The arch between it and the chancel, *not in line* with the same, shows plainly the junction of the then new portion of the church with the old. The pillars dividing this from the south aisle are of part Kentish rag-stone and partly of Bethersden marble, a kind of stone peculiar to the wealden of Kent, and when

NOTES

polished resembling Purbeck stone. There are still remains of stained glass of an early date in the north windows and in the west windows of the tower, which are beautiful specimens of the architecture of the time. Philipot, 1610, says it contained on a tabard the Arms of Kelsham. This Kelsham was a gentleman of Hedecron, who received a free pardon for participation in Cade's rebellion with Thomas Burden in 1450. (See State papers, Henry VI (1450) and Cant., Vol. VII.) Richard Borden was married at the altar in the church here shown to Joan Fowle, September 28, 1625. (See Headcorn Registers.)

NOTE G.

The Lady Chapel of Headcorn Church is doubtless one of its most interesting portions. Among the Patent Rolls in the Public Record Office is the license from Edward IV (6 Ed. 4, A. D. 1466) to Master Thomas Kent, clerk, and to Robert Kent, proctor, to found a perpetual chantry to celebrate Divine offices every day at the altar of the Blessed Mary in the Parish Church of Hedecrone, etc., etc., for the souls of the wives and parents of the said Thomas and

NOTES

Robert, etc., and other pious uses. The chantry to be called "Kentys Chaunteraye" and the chaplain to be a worthy man. Here the officiating priest sang daily Mass and prayed for the souls of the founders and others. Thus John Borden, in his will, dated A. D. 1469, says: "I will that an honest priest do sing in the church of Headcorn for the souls of my father Thomas and his wife Isabella, and of my grandfather Henry and his wife Robergia, and Thomas Sanders, for which I give 20 marks." There also, in A. D. 1531, was buried William Borden between Joan and Thomasine, his wives. The mortuary stone of Bethersden marble covered by the seats is still there, but the brass has been removed in common with others. William Borden's funeral must have been in those old Catholic days quite an event—the robed officiating priests winding through the churchyard and under the shadow of the gigantic oak, then in its prime. The entry into the church, the chanting of the priests and its solemn service were impressive pictures of the times.

NOTES

NOTE H.

This shows the south aisle of the church with the arch leading into the chantry and Lady Chapel and the tomb of Thomas Colepepper under the window next the arch. The font is very old, and is thought by some to be of greater age than the church. It is a perpendicular octagon, with angels and scrolls on the sides. Here were baptized many generations of dwellers in Headcorn, and certainly all the Bordens in continuation from Henry, A.D. 1370, to Richard, A. D. 1595, first of that name in the new world. Here also were baptized Richard, his son, A. D. 1626, and Thomas, A. D. 1627, future fathers of the many Bordens and Burdens of America. With an imagination in tune with the surroundings, what scenes might be conjured belonging to those past ages!

NOTE I.

This house, at the northeast corner of the churchyard and on the street leading towards Maidstone, is in its character an early example of the timbered house of about A. D. 1400, of which there are many specimens in the weald

NOTES

of Kent. The timbers are still in good preservation and of bony hardness, while its roof inside, thick-raftered, with great kingposts and overhanging eaves, shows it to have been formerly a building of importance. A fine stone chimney and chimney-piece stood formerly where the shop front now is, and several arched windows, stopped, are still to be found beneath the plaster in the walls. There are remains of an ancient garden wall of great blocks of Bethersden marble to the north of the premises, which show it to have been a house of importance in its day. A careful perusal of the will of William Borden (1531) establishes this as his residence of "Horchard Podsole," as the lands adjoining fit the descriptions there given. It is now in various tenements, and is owned by a descendant* of the family, by purchase some years since.

William Borden took the position of yeoman, and his friendship with Sir William Wotten, who lived at Boughton Place, only four miles distant, and who was one of the Privy Councillors of Henry VIII, has, as a matter of record, come down to this day.

* Thomas Witherden Burden, Esq.

NOTES

NOTE J.

This old tenement of British oak timber and plaster is doubtless of ancient date, and was originally the residence of the vicars of Headcorn, or, in some cases, of the officiating curate. Its date may be safely placed at about the year A. D. 1400, or a little prior to the age of the tower and aisles and nave of the existing church, which would probably be A. D. 1430. William Kettelsden, afterwards Sir William Kettelsden, lived in this house in 1507, and he sold it to William Borden, of Horchyard Podsole, in Headcorn. In 1595, when Richard Borden was baptized, the incumbent was Robert Reader, whose relative, Margaret Reader, married, as his second wife, Thomaſ Borden in May, 1583. She was, therefore, stepmother to Matthew Borden, who was, by the registers of Headcorn, Churchwarden of Headcorn in 1595, and the father of Richard.

The entrance to the house is still by a heavy antique oaken door, thickly studded with large, square-headed nails. This opens into a wide passage, extending through from front to back. On the right side are two rooms—one formerly

NOTES

used as a small sitting-room, and the other as the larder, or, as then called, the buttery. On the left of the passage another arched door led into the daily living-room of the family, with its large chimney-corners and open hearth, where logs burned bright in winter. Past the chimney was a passage leading to the study or receiving-room of the resident. The bedrooms over were floored with oak boards, while the ceilings, both above and below, were of great square beams and uprights. This style of dwelling, with variations, was the general type of the time. The house is still inhabited (1904) by the clerk of the parish. With regard to the word "buttery" used here for larder, it was common to the houses of the gentry of the period, as well as of those of less degree; *vide* the old Elizabethan ballad of the old and young courtier, where it says:

" An old buttery hatch worn quite off its hooks
And a kitchen that maintained half a dozen old cooks."

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